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MONSTERS OF THE MOVIES

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The Greatest Fright-Film Stars of All Time!

# MONSTERS OF THE MOVIES

TM

SPECIAL PREMIERE ISSUE ON

## KING KONG

AND HIS AWESOME OFFSPRING

Exclusive Interview With The Author Of

## NIGHT STALKER

PLUS: KARLOFF • LEE • LUGOSI • CHANEY



STAN LEE presents:

No. 1 June, 1974

# MONSTERS OF THE MOVIES

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# AN EERIE EDITORIAL BY OUR

# ELDRITCH EXECUTIVE EDITOR

You asked for it— so we did it!

A year or so back, Stan'l Stan— peerless publisher, rollicking raconteur, and former personal barber to Larry Talbot— put together three issues of a photo-and-gag magazine called MONSTER MADNESS. Response was so overwhelming that a write-the-caption-yourself contest drew literally thousands of entries (in fact, one or two still trickle in, now and then).

By the third (and final) issue, Stan and I had recruited Tony (The Tiger) Isabella, the Creature from Cleveland, to do a series of short-features for the mag as well, on every subject from Godzilla to Robert "Psycho" Bloch and back again.

And the third issue of MONSTER MADNESS turned out to be by far the most popular issue of all!

In the meantime though, MM. had somehow gotten lost in the shuffle, with all of our big new 75¢ titles like DRACULA LIVES, SAVAGE TALES, MONSTERS UNLEASHED, etc., etc., etc. In other words, we discontinued it. (We do make a mistake or two now and then, just to keep you on your toes, y'understand?)

And boy, did we ever make a mistake!

At least, we did if we can believe the zillions of letters which have inundated us, week after unrelenting week, ever since MONSTER MADNESS promiscuously bit the dust.

And we do believe 'em.

So what the hey— we decided to bring it back.

Well, actually, not quite.

For you raving editors of ours nearly unanimously made it clear that you wanted both long, informative features on the greatest fright-films of all time, and more ghoulishly grossy gags by Our Leader himself!

So, with Stan busier than ever with his publishing duties— and with Tony handling not only some commissioning chores but also the latest issue of FOOMB Magazine— we decided to go all out and get a New Face to handle the new mag for us.

Like I said, we went all out. All the way out to Hollywood, that is.

Hollywood. The dream factory.

Where it all happened back in the 30's and 40's and even in the 50's and 60's— not to mention last week and tomorrow.

Where Karloff first decided that "friend" was good and smoking was bad long before the Sergeant-General stuck his nose in.

Where Bela Lugosi was buried in his Dracula cape and has anybody stopped by his grave lately just to check it out?

Where Lou Chaney Jr. went around pleading, "Won't you help me?" (He needed it; his real name was Orville Chaney.)

Where King Kong climbed up the Empire State Building on a hickory in Buxton.

Hooray for Hollywood.

So, enter Jim Harmon.

Jim and I go back a long way, for two people who've never met.

But it was "way back in the early 1960's when, as a crass young college student, I first read one of his nostalgic fan-pieces on the comics of both our mispent youths (it turns out we share some of the same favorite comic titles in jazz about every decade); back, we even dug the same movies and radio shows. A few years back, Jim even co-edited a movie-magazine which was evidently distributed only in select lapar-stores across the country, so that no sober monster-beef ever saw a copy, 'cause we never met.

Or maybe not such a pity— 'cause now he's all ours, and with him come his capable cohorts, Ron Haydock and Don Glot and Doug Moech and Eric Hoffman and Al Sation and Heather Johnson— horror-heroes all!

Whether it's happening in Hollywood, or basting out in Britain's Hammer Studios, or anywhere in between— Jim or one of his lycaanthropic lackeys will be there, camera in one hand, pad in another hand, and pencil in another.

Like we said, they're a unique crew!

Now, a few words about MONSTERS OF THE MOVIES itself.

What kind of mag do we want M.O.M. (an we lovingly call it) to be?

Well, we don't want it to rely mainly on puns and gags to sustain your interest. (We figure Stan can handle that in the MONSTER MADNESS section we've set aside for that purpose. For the rest of the time, we prefer mostly to play it fairly straight, 'cause most of your letters have told us you fang-film freaks take your movie-monsters seriously, and we're with you!)

We don't want M.O.M. to keep rehashing the same tired articles over and over again, with rarely the sequence of the photos changed. (Hence this issue's exclusive interview with Jeff Rice, creator of *The Night Stalker*, perhaps the most successful movie-for-TV of all time!)

And we don't want M.O.M. to be liplocked— even to movies! That's why Jim, whose books on old radio shows have sold millions, thousands, perhaps even hundreds of copies, has included a special section on "Monsters of the Radio." (And if you don't think monsters can be even scarier when you don't see 'em— try turning off that right-light sometime!)

Well then, what do we want MONSTERS OF THE MOVIES to be?

Simply this:

The monster-mag that respects your intelligence— by assuming that you have some.

The monster-mag that's read by novices and connoisseurs and just about everybody in between.

The monster-mag that does in-depth interviews, in-depth reporting, in-depth everything!

Sure, we'll fall on our faces from time to time. (And I

do mean we— 'cause when big Jim Harmon falls, it's 'cause we didn't give him enough editorial guidance in, those marathon phone-calls that make our money-counters nervous.)

But we'll keep trying.

Now, it's time to turn the rest of the mag over to Jim and his Creative-Feature Crew. It took some doing, because he'd prefer to remain discreetly in the background (not unlike the Phantom of the Opera, no doubt)— but a couple of conversations and a few bomb-threats convinced him that the best way to start out MONSTERS OF THE MOVIES #1 was for Jim to tone false modesty (maybe even true modesty) to the winds and tell you a little about himself, so that you'd know just who is putting together

this mag for your entertainment, and why isn't he out selling new lamps for old instead.

The following two pages are edited down from the 37 manuscript pages which Jim submitted. (Just kidding, honest.)

Oh, one last thing before I split. The usual commercial. Send all comments, pro and con and otherwise, to:

MONSTERS OF THE MOVIES  
c/o Marvel Monster Group  
575 Madison Avenue  
New York, N.Y. 10022

We'll send 'em on to Jim— as soon as they install a mailbox in the Black Lagoon!

— ROY THOMAS





## EDITORIAL- BULL PEN WEST

Come right in, but no *blue movies*, editor Jim Harmon says, but is a visit involving any books with that *je ne sais quoi*. He's a realist, a purist, a geek.

*Masters of the Movies* is a magazine which will bring back fond memories of being frightened out of their wits to many readers, and introduce brand new creatures from undiscovered worlds, and rare, long-buried fears, to other fans.

Your editor — my name's Jim Harmon — has been associated with what has been called "nostalgia" — great old films, Golden Age comic-books, radio mystery and adventure dramas — for the past few years. I was calling it "nostalgia" when others were calling this great old stuff "cute" or "camp" or "trivia". I don't like the word "trivia". I don't think these things were trivial at all — they were important to the people who lived through them, important to popular culture, important to the history of times.

I am a relatively young man and most of these delights of yesteryear I experienced only as a member of the audience at a re-release of a double bill of the original *Frankenstein* and *Dracula*, a listener to the eerie squeaking door of the *Inner Sanctum* radio show, a reader of Stan Lee's *Fantastic Four* and *The Hulk*. I got into these things on a professional basis as soon as I could get by with impersonating an adult (a stunt I can still pull-off on occasion).

In the early sixties, I wrote several movie scripts for Jack H. Harris, producer of *The Blob*, *Dinosaurs*, and

science fiction author Kris Neville and horror-movie actor Ron Haydock. You'll find that name turning up in the magazine from time to time. I've also made hundreds of radio and TV appearances with such people as Mike Douglas, Robert Q. Lewis, Shari Lewis, Joe Franklin, and Woody Woodbury. My favorite TV guest was with Steve Allen when Steve, Joanne Carson, and I performed a condensed version of an actual old radio script of *The Shadow*. I introduced that "Mysterious side to the forces of law and order... who has the hypnotic power to cloud men's minds so that they can not see him..." (I suppose my love of old radio dramas might be partly inherited — I'm a distant relative of Brace Beemer, who played the part of the Lone Ranger on radio.)

Some background in the entertainment business helps an editor doing a magazine concerned with that important part of the industry — the horror films. I've been on the set of a Vincent Price picture, interviewed Christopher Lee, have known Robert Bloch (whose middle name is "the author of *Psycho*") for quite a few years now, and include among my friends, Kirk Alyn, star of many mystery and super-science serials and features, and George DeNormand, a stuntman who were the make-up of the Frankenstein Monster and performed some of the dangerous falls the studio would not allow Boris Karloff to risk in *Bride of Frankenstein*.

*Jim Harmon and horror star Christopher Lee listen to a fascinating story told by someone at the home of famous science fiction writer Forrest J. Ackerman.*

It also helps to know how to write when you're doing a magazine. I began writing in my teens and wrote for some of the last of the old pulp magazines, like *Science Fiction Quarterly* and *Swinging Detective*, went to *Galaxy* and *If*, have had my stories reprinted in many collections, both hardcover and softcover, have edited several earlier magazines, have published some three hundred magazine pieces, over thirty books, the best known of which are *The Great Radio Heroes*, *The Great Movie Serials* (co-authored with Donald F. Glut), *Jim Harmon's Nostalgia Catalogue* (about old horror movie posters, giant fare rats, the rings and badges given away by old radio and TV shows) now at the bookstores. I hope to use this experience to bring you an exciting, informative *Masters of the Movies*.

Helping me with the magazine here in Hollywood are Ron Haydock and Don Glut, who have had similar careers in films and writing. Overseeing the operation in New York are executive editor Roy Thomas and associate editor Mary Wolfman and somewhere out there, the legendarily Stan Lee himself. With that kind of a line-up bringing you the most fearsome and memorable monsters who ever died, we expect to add all the Very Important Persons to our ranks of readers — Peter Cushing, Forrest J. Ackerman, Alfred Hitchcock — and most importantly ("I Kid You Not" as Jack Paar said again) you!

— Jim Harmon, Editor



# THE HORROR CONTINUES...

DRACULA invades WASHINGTON, D.C.  
A CHILLING TALE OF REVENGE AND MYSTERY  
as the Lord of Darkness investigates the murderer  
of his vampire legions in

## HERE COMES THE DEATH MAN!

by GERRY CONWAY & VICENTE ALCAZAR

also:

## Assault of the She-Pirates!

Pirates rampage through CASTLE DRACULA  
looting it of its valuables.

And it is angry DRACULA who seeks  
vengeance for the thefts.

A fear-fraught tale of terror on the  
high seas by MIKE FRIEDRICH  
and GEORGE EVANS.

and:

THE THIRD CHAPTER  
OF OUR  
SENSES-SHATTERING  
adaptation of  
BRAM STOKER'S  
novel of horror!

plus:

A demon's den of photos,  
features and more!

# DRACULA LIVES!

JULY #7

On sale May, 7, 1974.



# KING KONG: MONARCH OF MONSTERS

AN INDEPTH ANALYSIS OF THE GREATEST  
MONSTER MOVIE OF ALL TIME.

By Doug Moench

These days an entire *panoply* of apes is required to baffle the box office, but in 1933, a single spectacular simian was sufficient fuel to ignite imaginations spanning the globe.

It's only natural that contemporary film producers should resort to the pandemonium of spectacle; the jaded sensibilities of today's thrill-saturated audience screen for a compensation of wretched excess and "more-is-better" studio policies. But KING KONG was made in the Depression 30's, a decade of misery and deprivation — conditions from which the entire American population sought to escape. If your grandfather was wealthy prior to the 30's, he soon found himself in the distressing position of watching his stock quotations plunge more swiftly than the assassin's dagger — say, about as swiftly as his body plummeted from a Wall

Street window to the uncaring pavement below. If he was moderately affluent (Middle Class), he suddenly found himself on a street corner hawking apples and hoping he wouldn't do too good at it... so he could take some of the groceries home for Sunday dinner. And if he was destitute, well... even his hope for a brighter future fell victim to the depression, TV's "The Waltons" to the contrary.

The movie industry flourished during the Depression, and was the only business to do so. And that in itself was the reason: movies provided an outlet for escape from the crushing realities of failing business, lost jobs, and drastically dwindling savings. Movies were packaged fantasy rendered as accessible and neat as the corner movie palace.

And KING KONG was — *is* — the ultimate fantasy trip, no matter what Stanley Kubrick claims. KONG was



Promotional poster for *KING KONG*.

*Merian C. Cooper—  
dreaming, perhaps, of his greatest creation?*

sensational without being garish. It was tremendous without being overblown. It was moralistic without being sanctimonious. It was profound without being pretentious. It was unique without trying to be different.

And it was a love story.

Merian C. Cooper was not a movie-maker; he just did that to make his bread. Deep down inside, instinctively, he was an adventurer — an incurable romanticist. He loved the thrill of the unknown, of danger, excitement, and most of all, escape. It was a mistake that set him down in the cold-hearted concrete canyons of an American city. And as often as possible, he remedied that mistake by travelling to Africa, India, South America, wherever the land was remote and the going rough.

But he did have to make his bread. Anybody who could manage to eke a comfortable living from something as enjoyable as making movies has to be shrewd. But Cooper's business acumen didn't stop there. Why should he settle for something only half-enjoyable to him when he could be trekking through the uncharted depths of some steamy jungle on the other side of the world? He chose the jungle, but he took his cameras with him. And produced the two most acclaimed travelogue documentaries in cinema history, *GRASS* and *CHANG*. These films were innovations in themselves, but Cooper's innate pioneer spirit was not easily satisfied. *GRASS* had been a unanimous hit, but when it was time to film *CHANG*, Cooper was not content to repeat himself. So he innovated yet again, implementing an unprecedented special

effects gimmick. At the most strategic moments of the film (a sudden, thundering charge of elephants or an abrupt closeup of a ferociously snarling lion), Cooper blew the frames up to three times the original size, creating eye-boggling shock effects as well as sticking the audience right into the midst of the terrifying situation. As a result of this ingenious ploy *CHANG*, too, was an unqualified blockbuster.

And, once again, Cooper was reluctant to repeat himself on film even though the call of the wild jungle beckoned to his soul time after time.

The solution to his dilemma was the product of several exterior but parallel developments. Both *GRASS* and *CHANG* had been silent films, relying solely on their visual attributes for success. But now they were fooling around with some newfangled method in which people could actually talk and be heard in the movies. Cooper would make a sound movie (and lucky for film-music aficionados that he did — Max Steiner's score is a masterpiece of broodingly ominous mood).



And, of course, it had to utilize a jungle setting. But what kind of plot? He was tired of documentaries; he wanted to tell a story.

He had been intrigued by the almost-human antics of the chimps and baboons he'd photographed for *GRASS* and *CHANG*. And then there was Darwin, who had created a furor of controversy several years before by postulating a direct evolutionary link between apes and mankind. That was it! He'd do a jungle picture in which the star was an almost-human ape. And in sound? Just imagine the rambling growls and fierce roars of the animals. But what about the story?

Then the romantic in Cooper emerged to the fore. It was bizarre, but he'd do a *love story* — a story in which an ape is attracted to a beautiful human girl. But then all sorts of sexual implications arose. Would the ticket-buying public accept that which was a natural consequence of love when it was an ape who was in love with a human? Cooper was determined that his film be innocent, a love story of quintessential purity. But how would he do it?

He knew well the manner of the groping minds that inhabited the thick skulls of symbolism-conscious critics. It was vital that the film have some element which would preclude the slightest sexual innuendo and even the barest possibility for sex.

Wait a minute. What if the ape were huge? Three times as big as the girl. No, ten times as big. Or more! It was perfect. An ape that huge would be a monster! Beauty and the beast. And think of what could be done with the ape's near-human intelligence and childlike innocence counterpointed with the power and savagery of a monstrous beast. Of course, it would have to be mechanical, and that meant a lot of money. But never mind that now; he'd get the story organized first.

Cooper recruited the estimable talents of celebrated English mystery writer, Edgar Wallace. When Wallace died before completing the story treatment (which incidentally, was very similar to Arthur Conan Doyle's *THE LOST WORLD*), Cooper hired James Creedman to whip up a screenplay from what Wallace and Cooper

*SKULL ISLAND.* The native village.





Along at the *Preroduct*

himself had already contributed to the plot. And Ruth Rose, Ernest Schoedsack's wife, provided additional dialogue.

It was ready. But who would front the money for such a crazy scheme? Cooper could think of no one. Besides, the mechanical gargantuan's movements would undoubtedly be too jerky to fool even the least sophisticated of audiences. Then Cooper got wind of some guy who was making fantastic dinosaur films right in his back yard, using miniature "puppets". That guy was Willis O'Brien, the father of stop-motion animation and perhaps the greatest special effects technician the art of film can boast.

Cooper went to see O'Brien. He did, and he also saw cuts from one of O'Brien's films ... *CREATION*. He was impressed enough to relate his mad dream to the special effects wizard on the spot. O'Brien didn't have to think twice. Immediately, he set to work on preliminary drawings depicting the huge ape in the most exciting scenes imaginable. These drawings were then taken by Cooper to David O. Selznick, executive producer of RKO Pictures. Selznick didn't like the drawing which depicted the film's climax, the ape being destroyed in Yankee Stadium — but was fully taken by a breathtaking scene of the ape straddling the summit of the newly-constructed Empire State Building, menaced by airplanes the size of toys when compared to the ape's stature. He said it was go if Cooper and O'Brien could, as Cooper claimed, produce the picture on the lot, at budget — a feat he plainly considered impossible.



But Cooper knew anything was possible and enlisted Ernest B. Schoedsack as co-director. Together, they selected actors Robert Armstrong, Bruce Cabot, Fay Wray, and Noble Johnson for their main characters. Filming began.

And O'Brien remained in his workshop undertaking the godlike vocation of creating life from inanimate latex-molded constructs covered with rabbit fur over a steel armature. The armature, comprised of flexible joints, facilitated natural movements roughly conforming with a human or ape skeleton.

To supplement the animation, a full-scale head, arm and foot of Kong were constructed from bear-hides. The head was used to depict Kong munching on several of the Skull Island natives. The foot was used to show Kong stomping on another native. And the hand was used for closeups of Kong grasping squirming Fay. The chomping and stomping scenes were subsequently cut from all but the first-release prints, and are two of the notorious "censored scenes" from *KONG*. A scene of the colossal ape inquisitively pecking at Fay's unfamiliar clothing was also axed, as was a sequence in which Kong, climbing up Fay's hotel building, reaches into the wrong room to grab (inaturally) the wrong girl. He casually tosses her away, to dash upon the pavement far below, when he realizes his error of mistaken identity. O'Brien and Cooper deemed many of these cuts as squirmish or prudish, but did make several of the deletions of their own volition. And upon the film's first release, they capitulated to the newly formed Production Code, toning all remaining scenes of violence in a dark, subduing

haze. Television, upon acquiring the film, excised even more scenes, most of which are Komper Room-tame in comparison with today's spate of violent film fare.

Film historians disagree concerning the famous spider-pit sequence. Denham's crew of sailors, pursuing Kong through the jungle, venture onto a log bridging a chasm — and become trapped on one side by Kong and on the other by a hungry *Styracosaurus*. Kong twirls the log, dislodging the sailors and sending them in screaming dives to the floor of the gorge below. Preliminary drawings by O'Brien depict the fate of these fallen sailors. Upon hitting the ground, huge spider-crabs ostensibly assembled from honey-combed caves in the cliff-walls to scoop up the human manna-from-heaven sent their way by Daddy Kong. Some authorities say this sequence was actually filmed but suffered the fate of the other censored scenes. Others claim it never got beyond the drawing stage, O'Brien himself having decided the digression bogged down the main narrative of Jack Driscoll pursuing Kong to rescue the abducted Fay.

*KONG*'s plot is much too familiar to reiterate here, but one of its most intriguing aspects has seldom been discussed. For nearly every adversary Kong faces on Skull Island, there is an equivalent foe to be confronted in New York. And there are other plot parallels as well; indeed, the main body of the film (from the moment Kong is first introduced until the climax) can be almost equally bisected, both in time and in individual schticks, with the bisection point being Kong's capture and the return to New York. The first half is set on Skull Island, the second on Manzanar Island. Fay is bound by the natives and sacrificed for the appeasement of their god, Kong. In New York, Kong is bound by Denham and offered for the appeasement of his god — Money — as well as for the appeasement of the paying audience's deepest curiosity. Kong abducts Fay on Skull Island and carries her off for his personal gain; Denham abducts Kong and "carries" the creature off for his personal gain. (Once in New York, Kong breaks free and again abducts Fay, but this time seemingly out of desperation.) In the jungle, Kong battles a huge serpent; in New York, he battles the metallic serpent of an elevated train. In the jungle, there's the flying *Pterodactyl*; in New York, there's the flying airplane. The love triangle remains the same on both islands, primitive and civilized: Kong and Jack Driscoll, both vying for Fay.

But the movements were far from natural. They were contrived through the stop-motion process of animation, a grueling, painstaking, meticulous method which gobbles up months of arduous effort and spits out minutes of screen time in return. The first stage of three-dimensional (as opposed to cartoon) animation involves the actual construction of the miniature models. Marcel Delgado was responsible for the *KONG* simulacra. Working from O'Brien's preliminary production drawings, Delgado fashioned six different Kong models, each only 18 inches tall, as well as a veritable menagerie of prehistoric dinosaurs which included an *Allosaurus*, a *Pterodactyl*, *Stegosaurus*, *Plesiosaur*, and *Styracosaurus* (the latter essentially similar to the more renowned and perennial favorite, *Tyrannosaurus*).

Now Obie was ready to begin.

Press the button of your home movie camera and you will hear a series of muted whirring clicks. Each click (there are 24 per second) is the sound of one individual frame of film of the filmstrip passing through the mystical innards of your camera. In other words, 1000

*Kong strikes out at the human ants that foolishly attack him.*





The daring escape from Kong.

frames of film will get you a scene 42 seconds long — less than a minute, enough time for your new puppy to jump up in the air a few times and let out with two or three cute yaps. 1000 frames: less than a minute.

Stop-motion animation is filmed one frame — one infinitesimal click of that constant whir — at a time. The Kong model is placed in the table-top jungle set. One frame is exposed. Click. O'Brien moves to the set, alters Kong's right foot a tiny smidge of a fraction of a millimeter. Same with the arm. Back to the camera. Click. Back to Kong; his foot is moved a little more, his

arm is moved a little more, and perhaps his head is turned, almost imperceptibly. Click. Kong's foot is moved slightly more, maybe now his ankle is bent minutely. Click. And so on. For endless hours of tedious work. But when those frames are developed and projected on the screen, 24 to a second, they mesh and flow together in a breathtaking representation of smooth movement. Kong comes to life!

The above paragraph describes O'Brien animating Kong through four measly frames of film — one-sixth of one second of film. Imagine how much time is consumed



Robert Armstrong

in the animation of Kong taking just a single step. And the fluidity of movement O'Brien achieved in animating Kong and the dinosaurs through some of the most fantastic feats ever conceived on film is nothing short of phenomenal. The man was a genius. Clearly, he had to diligently study — frame-by-individual-frame — the diverse movements of filmed apes, lizards, and human actors. How else could he achieve such precision in, say, the movement of a knee in relation to the ankle? How else could he attain the subtle believability of human expression conveyed in a quizzically-raised eyebrow on Kong's face?

O'Brien also employed the experimental method of rear-screen projection to create the illusion of a gigantic Kong next to the "tiny" actors. Briefly, a small screen was set up behind the table-top jungle set. Onto this small screen was projected the film of the human actors already shot by Cooper and Shoedsack. This film was frozen, frame-by-frame, while O'Brien animated Kong and the dinosaurs in front of the screen to correspond with the actor's movements. And all the while the animation camera was click-clicking away, photographing the animated Kong for the first time and rephotographing the film projected frame-by-frame on the rear screen. Voilà! Suddenly Fay Wray is no longer looking up at empty air and screaming; now she is menaced by the fearsome Kong.

Another interesting parallel derives from the fact that the character of Carl Denham (portrayed by Robert Armstrong) is a virtual duplicate of KONG's real-life producer, Merian Cooper. Both are adventurer-entrepreneurs — daring showmen of the highest order — and both set out to make a sensational movie in an uncharted jungle. Cooper, at least, certainly succeeded.

And his success has been unparalleled by imitators and undiminished by time. Indeed, KONG is so universally known and remembered that it has eclipsed from memory virtually everything else its creators have accom-

plished. To wit, Cooper pioneered both the Technicolor process and the vista-wide, curved-screen wonder of Cinerama. John Wayne's STAGECOACH was also his brainchild. But who remembers those things in conjunction with Cooper's name?

O'Brien went on to do, among others, SON OF KONG and MIGHTY JOE YOUNG, finally winning an Oscar for the latter in 1949, sixteen years after his brilliant tour-de-force with KONG. YOUNG is a nice little film, but does it really compare with the noble drama and lush grandeur of KONG?

And is Fay Wray really famous for anything but her marvelous shrieks of fright in the face of the awesome Kong's ponderous approach?

KONG's appeal is eternal, even now enthraling its third generation of spellbound watchers via incessant television reruns and art theater revivals. KONG has rightfully endeared itself to three generations. And if you don't believe that, scone through your back-issue stack of SPIDER-MAN comics and gaze at the paean to Kong respectfully submitted by Roy Thomas and Gil Kane about a year or so back: forty years after Kong's truly auspicious debut.

J. J. Jansson as Carl Denham, indeed!



Manly artist Dave Cockburn's conception of Kong vs. Pterodactyl.

# THE NIGHT-STALKER

*The Night Stalker.* One of the highest-rated movies in TV history. Strangely enough, it was a book before it was a movie, and now, *MOM* reporters Al Satan and Heather Johnson talk with the man behind it all... Jeff Rice. The inside story of one of the best vampire movies ever made.

**Question:** Did you write *The Night Stalker* as a novel or a screenplay?

**Answer:** Originally, I wrote it as a novel, under the title *The Kolchak Papers*.

**Q:** Was it ever announced under that title?

**A:** That's the title they started to film it under. Then, before they actually started filming, they changed it to *The Kolchak Tapes*. The first day of filming, they renamed it *The Kolchak Papers* because *The Anderson Tapes* had just been released. When they got through filming it, they decided they didn't like that title, so it went through various evolutions. At one time it was going to be called *Fee Fi Fo Fum, I Smell the Blood* . . . Finally, they decided on *The Night Stalker*, which I thought was "original," since there'd been a 1964 picture with Robert Taylor and Barbara Stanwyck called *The Night Walker*!

**Q:** Exactly how did your original story evolve?

**A:** I finished *The Night Stalker* at midnight on October 31st, 1970. I wrote it partially because I'd always wanted to write a vampire story, but more because I wanted to write something that involved Las Vegas — so that I could say a few of the things I felt should be said about Las Vegas, a few testy little observations about the way the town is run by the local politicians, the police, etc.

**Q:** Did you live there? Were you raised there?

**A:** I live there now. I was a police reporter on the *Las Vegas Sun* for two years. I've been a resident there since 1955, so I feel I know something about the town. Very few novels have ever been written set in Las Vegas, where the town itself was really an intrinsic part of the novel.

**Q:** It's usually just a background.

**A:** Not even really a background. The whole point of my story was that a vampire could easily live in Las Vegas, and nobody would think anything was odd — they wouldn't suspect he was a vampire. Men who never come out in the daytime make up about 25% of the town's

work force. A lot of people work what they call, if you'll pardon the expression, "the graveyard shift." I also thought Las Vegas would be an excellent town for a vampire to operate in because bodies are always being found out in the surrounding desert, long after they have been left there. They just found another one the day I left Las Vegas to come back here. There's really not too much more to the story, other than that it was an extremely accurate portrayal of Las Vegas. It was concerned with the time period between the primary and general election of 1970, which wasn't mentioned in the film, but did account for some of the reasons the politicians in the story were in such a sweat to keep the whole vampire thing quiet. The thing that will probably be of greatest interest is what happened after I wrote the book, and what has happened since it was filmed. I never wrote the screenplay. How it became a motion picture in itself was sort of accidental.

**Q:** How did you find out they were interested in your book as a screen property?

**A:** Nobody was interested in my book. That happened partly by chance. I was in the midst of writing it, and, through a series of accidents and circumstances which are not too terribly interesting to people not immediately concerned with them, the story and myself came into contact with an agent, Rick Ray of Adams, Ray, and Rosenberg. He looked it over Thanksgiving weekend of 1970, called me the following Tuesday, and said, "It's



Author-actor Jeff Rice is author of his own books which have ranged from *Shakespeare to Tennessee Williams*. He used his experiences as a one-time reporter and long-time resident in Las Vegas as a basis for the most horrifying vampire story in modern literature. The movie, based on his book, became the highest-rated movie for TV film on record.

## PAPERS

great! I'll represent it, and I think I can sell this even faster as a movie property than for book publication." And, the question was put to me: "Do you need money fast?" I said, "Yes, that's right! I need money fast!" That was an easy question to answer. No great interest was shown until he finally took it to Allan Epstein of ABC, who was Barry Diller's right-hand man. Mr. Epstein read it overnight, and said "I dig it! Buy it right now!" So it was optioned in April of 1971, and then Richard Matheson wandered into the office one day, took a look at it, took it home and read it, and said, "I've got to do the screenplay on this!" When I asked if I could get in on the screenplay, Ray told me, "Mr. Matheson's rather well-established, and he doesn't need any help." So, Richard Matheson did the screenplay, after he'd been informed of many, many, many rules and regulations as to what he could and couldn't write. So, the first screenplay was something I couldn't believe had been based on my book. There was nothing in it, and Matheson didn't like it at all. Consequently, he got together with producer Dan Curtis, whose great claim to fame up to that time was *Dark Shadows*, and between the two of them they reworked the screenplay through several revisions, getting it back more toward what the original story had to say. A few strategic changes were made in the names of some of the characters, and they were ready for production by early August, 1971. They

started production on a twelve-day shooting schedule on August 23rd on location in Las Vegas, with interior shooting and a few special sequences filmed in Los Angeles at Samuel Goldwyn Studios. Due to a few technical problems and a lot of late night shooting, I think they actually ran about 14 days on the schedule. But, the picture was finally finished, and was, I think, the second *ABC Movie of the Week* for 1972.

Q: What followed the initial screening of the movie?

A: What has happened since then has become history. It drew the highest rating and the biggest audience for a one-time showing of any movie ever made for television, and the only other movies shown on television up to that time that came out with higher ratings were *Ben Hur*, *Bridge on the River Kwai*, and *The Birds*.

Q: Do you feel *The Night Stalker* made a faithful transition from the book to the screen?

A: I thought they did very well by me, considering I was unpublished and unknown. They didn't want to include the political implications for two reasons: one, this was a television picture, and they didn't have that much time to develop the plot; they saw this as a tremendous across movie, while, if all the political sections were included,

killed, the house is burned down to destroy all traces of him. Two months after I finished the book, my friend telephoned me and said, "You'll never guess what happened while we were out to dinner last night! I just finished your book two days ago, and I thought you'd like to know the house burned down! About all that's left is your manuscript, which somehow didn't burn!" So, I picked out another house a few blocks away. When the news was released that we were coming into town to film the picture, sure enough that house mysteriously burned down! So, you get the impression that somebody didn't want that picture made!

Q: Did the network rules and regulations come into conflict with the actual filming of *The Night Stalker*?

A: There are all sorts of interesting little sidelights to this side of the story. For example, in my book I said the vampire made two very neat puncture marks in his victim's necks, and that was all there was to it. No blood and gore, everything neat and tidy. When Dan Curtis got hold of it, he kept sending the "victims" back to make up for bigger and bloodier marks on their necks — which was fine, except that ABC wouldn't allow any of those shots in the picture. They have this rule, which is just one of the many, many National Association of Broadcasting rules, Section IV, Rule 25, stating roughly that detailed



A fiendish killer checks his press coverage. Barry Atwater as Janos Skarsky, *The Night Stalker*.

# THE NIGHT-STALKER PAPERS THE NIGHT-

they'd have ended up with something that they felt would've been neither fish nor fowl. Secondly, they did want to be able to go back to Las Vegas to film other things, so...

Q: ...If they'd filmed it as written, they'd have been run out of town!

A: Well, that made it quite a simple choice! I could tell you endless things they did that disturbed me no end. In the book, I had the vampire take refuge in a very nondescript house — it was an actual house, on the corner of Viking and Spenser. There wasn't another house near it, except way at the other end of the street, almost a quarter of a mile distant. It's a little area on the edge of the desert that's just about three blocks from anywhere. There are neighborhoods all over, but this one little spot has never been developed. I thought, if somebody wanted to be alone and be left alone, and yet be very close to people, this would be the ideal place.

Q: In other words, a vampire could conceivably live there?

A: Or anybody else. As it turned out, my best friend lived there! I'd asked him if he'd let his place be used for it, as a television picture. He said, "Well, I guess I can," said, "Sure!" Now, in the book, after the vampire is

presentations of brutality, agony or suffering of a victim, cannot be shown by sight or sound. So these scenes were all cut, even though the "victims" shown were supposedly "dead."

However, I'll give you another example of how that rule came into conflict: there is a shot of the vampire, taken right from the book, with, among other wounds, a huge gash down his forehead. What's trickling out of this gash is a clear fluid, it's not blood. They debated endlessly as to whether or not to leave this scene in the film, and I pointed out to them that, according to the rule, this scene would have to be cut if it was a "detailed presentation of agony." But there's no suffering on the vampire's face. He gets up after being clubbed by three men, is shot at least thirty-times as he runs to a fence, climbs over it and runs off after they've blown a hole through the fence big enough to throw a grapefruit through! Now, if that's agony, let me have some of it, because he's in better shape after all that than I am now!

But, when it came to the staking scene, two very quick shots of the vampire's face, screaming in some kind of rage, were shown. Other than that, they kept cutting away from his face to Kolchak's, to the FBI agent present at the scene. They did show one fast shot of Kolchak raising that hammer, but you never quite actually see him strike the stake. I felt they were right in this one, because it's more important to show the reactions of the people involved in doing the deed than to see

blood. It's not very interesting to see a stake going into a man's chest.

Q: Theatrically-released films have made quite a thing of blood in recent years.

A: You know, it's getting harder and harder to scare people, they're becoming so inured to things. But television is so namby-pamby, it's really ridiculous. They worry about violence on television, but do you know what the real problem is? The problem is that they present violence and don't make it horrible enough! You see a character on TV get shot in the chest with a .45 at a distance of twenty feet, and he topples forward and makes some kind of speech before he goes. There's not a mark of blood on him. You shoot a man with a .45 caliber bullet at that distance, and, unless he weighs better than 250 pounds, he's going to fall backwards, and there's going to be a hole in his chest the size of your fist, and his whole back will be blown out! It's ugly. I've seen people shot, and it's not pleasant!

Q: TV sticks to all the familiar conventions.

A: What is the convention that has always followed the monster pictures? The danger is made known to the men, and the women are in the safe, secure area? They accept the idea right off the bat!



The quintessential newshawk, Carl Kolchak as portrayed by Darren McGavin in *The Night Stalker*. Here, armed with a cross, Kolchak stalks the vampire in his lair.

**L**as Vegas! The vampire in my story was given to wearing very dark suits, well-cut European suits, and all manner of shirts and ties. The only thing I had him do that was unconventional in this regard was to wear a hat at night on several occasions — most people don't do this in Las Vegas.

**B**ut, I had him doing things like wearing some kind of face makeup to hide the pallor of his skin. Sometimes he'd wear glasses, sometimes a mustache, sometimes a wig, sometimes he'd put grey streaks in his hair. He's not a dummy. His big problem was that he had terrible breath! You never see this mentioned in movies, but if you do any reading up on vampires, you'll find a vampire is supposed to have absolutely foul breath. Do you remember the scene in the film with the used car salesman? In the book it ran two pages of dialogue. He says, "But alluvia sudden in the doorway there was this smell ... and I saw that guy with his bony little red eyes, and his breath, it would knock over a house!" I have one scene where the vampire is spotted going into a drugstore and buying six tubes of Bisacil Well, that was one of the first things that went when they began plotting the movie version. They said, "That's gotta go, that's absolutely disgusting! Besides, what'll we do if we get a breath-mat for a sponsor, or something?" I said, "You make a big thing out of the fact that our villain is using their product!"

**P**ictures, which has owned the screen rights to *Progeny of the Adder* for some time, told ABC they were going to sue me for plagiarism because they thought I had stolen from Whitten's book. I asked how this was possible if I hadn't read the book, and they replied that it had been out for five years, and this gave me "implied access" under the law. I said, if I didn't buy the book, and I was alone at the time I didn't buy it, how do I prove I didn't buy the book when there was no one around to see me not buy it? I simply told them that most of the characters in *The Night Stalker* are based on real people, and if I had to, I'd subpoena half of Las Vegas and bring those people into court. They dropped their suit.

**Q:** What has happened to your manuscript since the movie version was aired?

**A:** Basically, this is what has happened since it was premiered: arrangements were made by ABC, after several pleas by myself, to make a second motion picture, continuing the adventures of our intrepid reporter, Carl Kolchak. They commissioned Richard Matheson to write the original screenplay, because they'd decided I didn't have the necessary ability or experience, and because I'd never sold a screenplay. They didn't want to risk any money on what they considered an unknown, (and still then unpublished writer). So, Matheson created an

original story, directed by ABC to do so following the formula set forth in *The Night Stalker*. What it became basically was the same story again, with a different monster in a different setting. This time the setting was Seattle. In October of '72, while we were finishing the contractual arrangements for the book publication of *The Night Stalker*, the deal was made, with the assistance of Richard Matheson, for me to novelize his *The Night Strangler*.

Subsequently, *The Night Strangler* was premiered around the middle of January of 1973 and did very well in the ratings although it suffered by comparison to the original. The scripting was done to a formula, which Matheson was not happy with. The direction, by producer-director Dan Curtis, was not up to the standards of John Llewellyn Moxey, who directed the original. The publication of the books was delayed until the very end of '73 so they could be placed on the top of the publisher's list in the 1 and 2 positions for 1974. *The Night Strangler* came out in December, and in one month sold out the entire printing of close to half a million copies. *The Night Strangler* came out in February and is also doing record business. So, it looks like I am finally launched on a career as an author and, hopefully, I may soon sell my screenplays, as several producers have shown an interest. My career as an actor we won't talk about in this interview; at least the offers are coming in now.

# STALKER PAPERS "THE NIGHT-STALKER"

**Q:** Frankenstein's villagers with their torches...

**A:** Right. The angry townsfolk with torches, climbing up the hill. That's why I chose Las Vegas — there isn't a more cynical place on earth! You say, "A vampire's on the loose!" And, they say, "Uh-huh. Oh, yeah? Send that boy to the mat house, he's sick!"

**Q:** There's a difference, too, in that *The Night Stalker*, like *Count Yorga* and some other recent films, takes place in a contemporary setting.

**A:** I didn't see *Count Yorga*. I only saw the sequel, but the action in that film was always set away from everything. My story is set right in the middle of a 24-hour town, and when you're downtown or on the Strip at night, it's just as bright as it is in the daytime! That's the idea that I really wanted to create, that there isn't that much "night" in much of Las Vegas. Of course, there is night there, as there is everywhere else, but the whole feeling is different, because everybody's up at night there.

**Q:** Something else *The Night Stalker* avoided was the conventional *Lugosi-Dracula* vampire image — a square gentleman in evening dress, with the inevitable cape.

**A:** Well, he would be pretty obvious looking like that in

**Q:** This breath-problem facet of the vampire is mentioned in *Dracula*, in one of the early scenes — Dracula steps too close to Jonathan Harker, and Harker swoons... Then how is the Lugosi-type Dracula so captivating to his acquaintances?

**A:** He brushes his teeth!

**Q:** Did you research the subject of vampirism?

**A:** Yes, a little bit of research. I read all sorts of books on vampire and werewolf legends, scholarly works. And, I've read all sorts of books on old police cases in Germany, England, and Eastern Europe — Jack the Ripper and such. There have been many historical cases of men who labored under the illusion that they were vampires, and they drank the blood of their victims after they'd slaughtered them in some foul way.

**Q:** Have you read Leslie Whitten's *Progeny of the Adder*?

**A:** No, but evidently, when we were just about to start filming *The Night Stalker*, American-International

**Inset:** Struck by a policeman's nightstick in an earlier encounter, the vampire, cornered by pursuers, shows the effects of the fight. What he bleeds ISN'T blood.



# HORRORScoop

by CARLA JOSEPH

Greetings, effendi! Gash up your sonic, cradle your *deimos*. And, seppong around for an extra scalpel—'cause MONSTERS IN THE MOVIES has a fear-fraught fest of photos from two new Hendish flicks straight out of the hallowed halls of Herodotus' infamous Hammer Studios! Two spectacular offerings never-before-screened-in-the-United-States!! (How's that for something to howl about, fangs?) Years, those friendly folks at Paramount Pictures are getting ready to release two of the heaviest Hammer horror happenings ever to leave Hanover Square...

First, there's the all-new, action-packed swash-bruhalter—CAPTAIN KRONOS, VAMPIRE HUNTER, Brian Clemens, best known for his fine work on the AVENGERS TV series, wrote and directed this spine-tingling saga. Featured are Horst Janson as Kronos and John Carter as Professor Groot. From all indications, it promises to be as summonable an outpouring of creative invention as were those swashy mind-boggling adventures featuring Emma Peel and John Steed!

But, hold on, gang! There's yet another still-in-the-can flick...About to come your way is FRANKENSTEIN, THE MONSTER FROM HELL, featuring the fury, fellow on the opposite page, offering up a different view of the Frankenstein Monster. Also featured is that all-time master of macabre movies, Peter Cushing!

Sorry, fear-friend! That's all the information we're going out. Due to all the great stills, we've got, we've decided to devote the rest of this space to pictures not prose (or, differentiation?). So, turn the page and feast your eyes on these brandnew, never-before-shamed, stills supplied in advance through the courtesy of Paramount Pictures and brought to you in a specially added edition of HORRORScoop\*



FRANKENSTEIN, THE MONSTER FROM HELL



CAPTAIN KRONOS, VAMPIRE HUNTER



SPECIAL MONSTERS OF THE MOVIES MINI-SERIES BONUS!

# OUT OF THE MOUTHS OF GHOULS!

BY STAN LEE



Cool it,  
honey!  
My parents don't  
believe in  
mixed  
marriages.



I won't  
stop 'till  
you say  
WEEEEE!



Being pregnant  
isn't what bugs  
...  
I don't have  
Blue Cross!



Us Green Giants  
can't be jolly  
all the time!



Not Not! You can't  
hear the tapes!  
It'll violate  
Presidential  
confidentiality!



Blood? That's kid stuff  
Nowadays I'm into  
gasoline.

# COPE...MONSTERSCOPE...MONSTERSCOPE...MONSTER

The Man of Bronze: George Pal, producer of classic and Oscar winning films like *War of the Worlds*, *Destination Moon* and *The Time Machine*, has acquired the movie rights to all 181 Doc Savage novels and in Colorado has begun filming *The Man of Bronze*, the first published Doc Savage title. Ron Ely,泰山 on television, has been cast by Pal to portray Kenneth Robeson's dynamic super adventurer here of pulp magazines, radio programs and Marvel comics.

Directed by Michael Anderson, with script by Joe Marmen and George Pal himself, *The Man of Bronze* is the first in a series of Doc Savage films from Warner Bros. Pal said the films will be nothing but "fun, fun, fun!" Warner Bros, incidentally, is also preparing new feature versions of both *Tarzan of the Apes* and *Superman*, as well as a TV pilot of *Wonder Woman*.

In London, Peter Cushing stars again as Shelley's Dr. Frankenstein in Hammer Films' new *Frankenstein and the Monster from Hell* and thee travels to Hong Kong to take on Hammer's *Legend of the Golden Karpas* for director Roy Ward Baker. In Hollywood, though, comedy writer Mel Brooks is producing *Young Frankenstein* with Gene Wilder for 20th Century-Fox. As may be expected, the Mel Brooks Frankenstein will hardly be a serious exercise in Gothic film horror. Dracula, too, is getting a light hearted rendition, in *Terror of Dracula*, a French film starring Bernard Menas, directed by Pierre Grasinet.

Back in Hollywood, Sam Kotosky has completed photographing *New for Never*, a Bernard K. Evans weird mystery thriller with a plotline not unlike Boris Karloff's *The Man They Could Not Hang* (1939).

Starring Christopher Lee and Barbara Steele, *Thunder Films' New for Never*, described as a banquet of blood, a nine course meal, tells what happens when nine guests are invited to a mansion owned by millionaire test Mr. A, a mystery figure never revealed until the final reel. After dinner, the nine guests are served a tops recording of mysterious Mr. A who informs them they are all marked for death, to revenge the murder of a harlot whom they all knew. Mr. A

## PREVIEWS & REVIEWS: WHAT'S HAPPENING

also reveals his trapped guests cannot find freedom because all the doors and windows are electrified with 30,000 volts.

Although each of the nine guests swears innocence of the harlot's murder, Mr. A begins doing away with them in various diabolical manners: killing one guest by an electrified door, another by strangulation and other guests by poison, butchery and even by frightening some of them to death.

Events in London, where producer Herman Cohen has completed *Hiring Crows* with Jack Palance, another Dracula star.



If you saw *The Hellstrom Chronicle* (1971) you probably didn't know until you read the movie credits that the documentary's narrator, Dr. Nils Hellstrom, was not actually a real live entomologist but only an actor playing the part of "Dr. Hellstrom". The documentary itself though was all far real even if the actual character of the on-screen Hellstrom was not. Now "Dr. Hellstrom" returns in Hellstrom's *Hive*, a Doubleday novel (14.95) by Frank Herbert, Hugo award winning author of *Dune*.

*Hellstrom's Hive* is a dramatic science fiction sequel to the true life documentary and relates how Dr. Nils Hellstrom has been using all the money he made from *The Hellstrom Chronicle* to finance a secret compound in Oregon inhabited by 50,000 super human people who possess the qualities of insects investigating Hellstrom's questionable enterprise as secret agent Clive Paragi, who discovers, to his horror, not only Hellstrom's colony of insect people but also a deadly super vapor weapon that can destroy all of mankind.

Frank Herbert's novel is a most unusual followup to "Dr. Hellstrom's" most unusual movie of a few years ago.

And speaking of bugs, Christopher Lee has expressed interest in filming Donald F. Glut's new science fiction horror novel *Bugged* from Manos Books. *Bugged* is a weird tale about hordes of insects being controlled by a mysterious scientist who uses the crawling things for his own end designs. Lee may produce the film version himself, through his Charlemagne Produc-

America's International's latest is *Madhouse*, with Vincent Price, who is also hosting *Chock-Sieverman's Horror Hall of Fame* on ABC-TV's *The Wide World of Entertainment*. Other new AIP horror films are *N Lives by Night* and *Sugar Hill*, starring Marlo Bay - who wages war against the Mafia with a legion of zombies.

*Kiss Me, Manster* starring Janine Reynaud and Rossana Towne is one of a series of new Joseph Green horror thrillers with these two girls. Green's *The Dragon Lady*, filmed in Hong Kong, is also first breaking into menace in theaters.

Harry Novak, whose *Bewitched* International has just released *Crazed Vampire*, has a couple more new horror films ready: *The Devil Dwell* with Anne Sopron, Tony Eades and Tarben as the Dwarf; and *A Taste of Hell*, starring John Garwood and Lisa Lorenz. The latter is about a half corpse-elf killer creature bent

## IN HORROR & FANTASY WORLDS



on a vengeful mission.

Peter Sellers has signed with Columbia to star in *The Ghoul in the Noonday Sun*, to be filmed in England.

Ray Dennis Steckler plans filming the science fiction *Terror At Goliath Ranch* and the terrible *Bog Paspis*, with Gordon Scott, after completing the editing of *maniacal*

There's terror on the turntable, too, along with science fiction and mystery adventure, in George Garabedian's new line of classic old time radio show albums featuring Bela Lugosi in *Suspense* "The Doctor Prescribes Death", *Flesh Garage*, *Superman*, *The Shadow*, *Jungle Jim*, *Gas Winslow*, *Tom Mix* and among many more, *Captain Midnight* and *Red Ryder*. Besides the great album covers, and the records themselves, many Garabedian albums (P.O. Box One, Anaheim Calif., 14.95 each) are highlighted by liner notes specially written by Jim Hamm.

Redola Records is also waxing old time radio chills with Peter Lorre in Edgar Allan Poe's "The Black Cat" from *Escape*, and Diana Willis as *The Shadow*, with a cover depicting Victor Jory from *The Shadow* movie serial.

Collectors Note: *The American Cinegrapher* August 1973 features an excellent color photo article on the special effects making of *Wayage to The Outer Pleiads*, a realistic space voyage to the year 2348 and the first movie filmed aye early for the new *Space Station* concept it's going movie, San Diego's Space Station cost more than four million dollars to construct with its huge domed, wrap-around movie screen. *Voyage* was produced by Graphic Film Corp, who filmed *To The Moon and Beyond* (retitled *Connex*) for the 1964-65 New York Worlds Fair.

CURRENTLY PLAYING: *C. Monster* Peter Cushing, Christopher Lee, Terri on *Half Moon Street* (Herst Appear, Karen Hubel), *The Maniacs Are Loose* (Ray Dennis Steckler), *The House That Could Murder* (John Astor, Robin Strasser), *The Beast and The Venus* (Jean Gibson), *Honey Express* (Peter Cushing, Chris Cooper), *Mr. Super Invisible* (Dean Jones), *Death Whispers* (George Sandra), *The Lesson* (Steve Kids Meet The Monsters) (Ray Dennis Steckler), *Invasion of the Baa Baa*, *Crypt of the Living Dead*, *Island of Lost Gods*, *Crypt of the Living Dead*, *Legend of Boggy Creek*, *Tales That Blitz*, *Mass Madness*, *The Horrible Sex Vampire* - and *Don't Look in The Basement!*

# MONSTERSCOPE...MONSTERSCOPE...MONSTERSCOPE

# KARLOFF AT THE RAVEN'S

By Ron Haydock

Boris Karloff, the horror movie star supreme for almost half a century! Strangely enough, interviews he gave during his lifetime were seldom as informative as this one, in which Ron Haydock asks the questions about *Frankenstein* and Karloff's other movies that we would have liked to have asked the Master... An article especially for dedicated monster fans, first of two parts.

**T**he day I went on the set of American International's *The Raven* to hunt up Boris Karloff for an exclusive interview, Edgar Allan Poe's mammoth Raven Castle on Soundstage Ten at Producers Studio in Hollywood California was a hustling, bustling panorama of great activity and, frankly, much excitement. The movie company was busily preparing to shoot the next sequence in this brand new, big-scale horror film treatment inspired by a few lines from Poe's famous verse about the ominous raven that came calling once upon a midnight dreary. Movie technicians, cameramen and stagehands were all busily scurrying back and forth across the vast interior castle set: carrying props, moving the big 35mm Mitchell studio cameras into position, checking light meter readings, calling various instructions to lighting men high up on the catwalks that overlooked the colorful Poeque scene; the very atmosphere there that afternoon in March, 1963, was highly tinged with the creative electricity of big-time horror movie makers eagerly at work.

Looking around for Boris Karloff in the midst of all this electric activity, I first saw quite a few of the other principals involved in this new production of *The Raven*. James H. Nicholson and Samuel Z. Arkoff, the owners of American International Pictures, were having an animated discussion with Vincent Price near the large main hall of the castle; director Roger Corman was nearby, mulling over the script with Peter Lorre and the script girl. Hazel Court was over in makeup. Co-stars Jack Nicholson and Olive Sturges were laughing over some joke Nicholson had just cracked. And Floyd Crosby, the renowned cameraman who had been



Boris Karloff starring in *The Raven*, American International, 1963, at the time of this interview.

*The Comedy of Terrors*, another of the American International films Karloff made with Vincent Price and Peter Lorre, joined by Basil Rathbone.

photographing all the studio's Edgar Allan Poe films, was stepping up to the big Mitchell camera and then peering through the viewfinder, lining up the next shot.

Still glancing around for Karloff, and still not finding him, I noticed a group of stagehands beyond Fred Crosby who were moving what appeared to be a section of bleachers into position near the castle set. I was curious about this, I asked studio publicist Roy Smith what was the reason for the bleachers?

"We're opening the doors to groups of school children and their parents this afternoon," he said. "They all want to come down and meet Boris Karloff and watch him work in the movie. So we're putting up the bleachers for them."

Roy Smith said the studio had been literally besieged with phone calls and letters once it had become general knowledge in Hollywood that Boris Karloff would be starring in their next Edgar Allan Poe film, *The Raven*. At that time Karloff had been away from Hollywood stages for six years, working elsewhere in the world, though returning to New York City periodically to film introductions and closings to his highly-rated *Thriller* television program. The big success of *Thriller* had of course gathered the King of Horror Films an entire new generation of fans and admirers, as well as having reaffirmed the belief of older fans in his continuing mastery as a great practitioner of movie macabre.

Looking around again, I finally spotted Karloff sitting near one end of the vast main Raven Castle hall. Garbed in medieval necromancer's gown and midnight black skull cap, Karloff, the most renowned star of horror films in motion picture history, was casually smoking his pipe and thoughtfully regarding all the various kinds of movie-making activity going on around him. Roy Smith said Karloff was delighted that Nicholson and Arkoff were allowing visitors on the set and that he would be glad to see as many of them as time permitted. Karloff always had time for his fans.

I looked around once more at all of Raven Castle, frankly marvelling at all the creative ingenuity and expertise that had gone into the design and construction of that panoramic set that was literally the entire interior of a medieval castle built inside the four walls of the huge barn-like soundstage. Besides the sprawling main entrance hall with a flight of wide steps leading down to it, Raven Castle was complete with dining room, side rooms and even a staircase that led up to the second floor. The rooms of this second floor, however, were located right on the ground floor of the soundstage. They were to be found behind and around the bulk of the Castle's first floor groundplan. Daniel Haller, who later directed Karloff in American International's H.P. Lovecraft horror tale *Die, Monster, Die*, had designed Raven Castle and had been the art director on all the other Edgar Allan Poe films too. The success of these films is in no little way directly attributable to Haller's magnificent medieval reconstructions.

I made my way through all the electric activity there at Raven Castle and stepped up to Boris Karloff, still at his pipe. I told him about the interviews for the monster

magazine and he said by all means. So I pulled up another studio deck chair, sat down and we started talking about things unholy and deeds despicable.

# # #

"Well, I'll tell you," Boris Karloff said with something of a twinkle in his otherwise grave, solemn, menacingly thoughtful eyes. "I am delighted that people think I am such a wonderful bogey man. It's about all I've been doing in the films since *Frankenstein* in 1931, you know. Scaring people," he mused.

"The world likes to be scared," I said. "At least in horror movies. And you certainly have done your share of that."

"Indeed," said Boris Karloff, drawing on his pipe once more. "Indeed I have."

Which was true enough of course. For during a screen career that's both spanned more than 50 years and made him an infinitely unique legend in his own lifetime, Karloff had played all sorts of dastardly villains and irredeemably loathsome creatures who would invariably commit the most heinous of crimes. Occasionally without meaning to.

In *Buddenbrooks*, for example, Karloff had been the scheming headmaster of a turn-of-the-century insane asylum, while as Im-ho-tep, *The Mummy*, he knew life beyond death and ancient Egyptian revenge in a second life. *The Tower of London* saw him performing as Mord, the chiefblood executioner at the dread guillotine in medieval England. A bald-headed, wicked-eyed individual, Mord went about his gruesome business of decapitation with a grim delight. Karloff was also *The Ghoul*, a vampire in *Black Sabbath*, mad scientist in *The Ape* and *The Man With 9 Lives*, and the high priest of a devil-worshipping cult in *The Black Cat*, co-starring Bela Lugosi, his grim contemporary in horror thrillers of the thirties and forties.

Other films saw Karloff as the insidious Oriental mastermind of cutthroat diamond robbery in *The Mark of Fu Manchu*, a fiendish grave robber in *The Body Snatcher*, (also with Bela Lugosi), a zombie in *The Walking Dead* and, among so many more terrifyingly memorable screen roles of menace, of course, he was the infamous Monster of Dr. Frankenstein, the role that first brought him to the attention of the world.

"It's rather incredible to me that people will remember those old films," Karloff said, drawing thoughtfully, reflectively on his pipe. "I know the *Frankenstein* set is constantly playing on television but still you might think that with all the newer thrillers being made these days, and in color too, people would tend to put those older films back into memory."

"A lot of them are classics now," I said. "Particularly the original set of *Frankenstein* films you made. Nobody has ever been able to top them."

"Many people like *The Bride of Frankenstein* better

*Medium shot:*

*Karloff's first appearance as the Monster, from Frankenstein, Universal, 1931.*

*Close-up: A portrait of the Monster in *Bride of Frankenstein*.*





*The Bride of Frankenstein* (Elsa Lanchester) meets her intended for the first time.

than the first one, but I don't know," Karloff said. "I've always preferred the original film. In that picture the Monster didn't speak, you remember. But when we made the sequel about the Bride, they had me speaking all sorts of dialogue. Time and time again I argued that the Monster shouldn't speak. If he spoke, he would seem too much more human, I thought. But the director won his argument."

"Frankenstein's monster spoke rooms in the Mary Shelley novel," I pointed out. "Actually in the novel, the Monster was more human than Frankenstein and those chapters where the Monster tells his story are some of the best writing in the whole book."

"Well, the book is certainly a classic of literature," Karloff said. "But when we were making those Frank-

stein films, I always felt, and still do in fact, that it would have been better had the Monster not spoken at all. I was glad when we made the third one, *The Son of Frankenstein*, which was the last one I made, that we went back more to the original concept of the original film and had no dialogue for the Monster. Of course it's a pity, I think, what they did to the old fellow in those later films and how they mocked him in that picture with those two comedians, Abbott and Costello," Karloff said with a quiet shudder of extreme disapproval.

Karloff was referring to how, in later scripts, Universal Pictures began more and more to depict Frankenstein's Monster as being nothing much more than a savage, brainless, lumbering sort of a creature who seemed to live on in picture after picture for the sole purpose of creating



Karloff is surprised on the set of *Son of Frankenstein* by director Rowland V. Lee in a very rare and adorably anticipatory *The Monsters*.

a lot of death and destruction, or for purposes of sheer revenge. This concept, which weakened the series considerably, was directly opposed to the Monster as Karloff had portrayed him in the first three films, where the character was scripted as a rather pitiful creation of a questing, determined young scientist; a creature who then sought desperately to find his way through a world of men and women who despised and feared him at every turn, a civilization that wanted only to destroy him even though the Monster himself was only seeking understanding, compassion and friendship.

Karloff was also referring to *Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein* (1948), the last of the eight Frankenstein films produced by Universal through the Thirties and Forties. In this final entry, which purists horror devotees will detest at the mere mention of its title, the famed Frankenstein monster was used strictly as the butt for comedy. Karloff said that, originally, the studio had wanted him to return to the screen as the monster in that film but that after reading the script, he turned them down flat. The studio then handed the role of the monster to Glenn Strange, who had played the part in two previous films, *The House of Frankenstein* (1944) and *The House of Dracula* (1945) horror extravaganzas that also featured Count Dracula, The Wolf Man, The Mad Scientist and The Hunchback. In *The House of Frankenstein*, Karloff had played the mad scientist Dr. Gestav Neumann.

"I read the script," Karloff said about the Abbott and Costello film, "and I saw how they were going to actually ridicule the Monster. Make fun of him in that one. Well, I wanted no part in that. I can tell you! The Monster had been very good to me in my career as an actor. I didn't want to turn my hand on an old friend."

Changing the subject slightly, we talked about the makeup rituals and rigorous time schedules he had to endure while making his three Frankenstein films—*Frankenstein* (1931) with Colleen Clive and Dwight Frye, *The Bride of Frankenstein* (1935) with Elsa Lanchester and Ernst Thesiger, and *The Son of Frankenstein* (1939) with Basil Rathbone, Bela Lugosi and Lionel Atwill.

"I had to be up very early every day I was shooting, usually around four, never later than five, so I would get to the studio by six o'clock," Karloff said. "Jack Pierce met me there and for the next five or six hours we were locked up tight in his makeup room, putting on the makeup and wardrobe. He was a wonderful man. He was a perfectionist and a genius with makeup. He created the Monster's makeup, you know, and I've always felt that if it hadn't been for him and all the care he took with the Monster, that things would never nearly have gone so well for me. He created the makeup for *The Mummy*, too, and many other monsters at Universal."

Karloff said that all during the hours of making up he had to sit as motionless as possible in the makeup chair while Jack Pierce, a genuine artist in his craft, pam-

takingly made him up as Frankenstein's monster. First Pierce would begin plastering on Karloff's facial and arm makeup, applying thick greenish-gray greasepaint coloring to his face, neck and hands. After this was completed, Pierce would trench bloody scars on Karloff's forehead, scalp, neck and wrists. The monster's fire-wrinkled skin was made of collodion and cotton, and he said each day Jack Pierce spent from thirty to forty minutes making up his hands alone. Then afterwards Pierce would fit on aluminum neck spikes, more popularly known as the Monster's electrodes, to each side of his neck, and then fit steel braces to Karloff's arms so that, as the Monster, he wouldn't be free to move around as easily, as agilely, as a normal human being might. Around twelve o'clock, though, Karloff could finally move out of the makeup chair. Pierce would then fit on the Monster's shoes, which weighed eleven pounds, five ounces each, and were size twenty-four.

The final Pierce touch in creating Frankenstein's monster was helping Karloff on with the monster's padded suit which was two inches thick and which Karloff wore beneath his outer clothing from neck to ankles. This suit gave him the huge, awesome countenance of the Monster.

"Let me tell you, you can get very weary having to sit in a makeup chair for so long as that," Karloff said. "But I just thought of it all as part of the job."

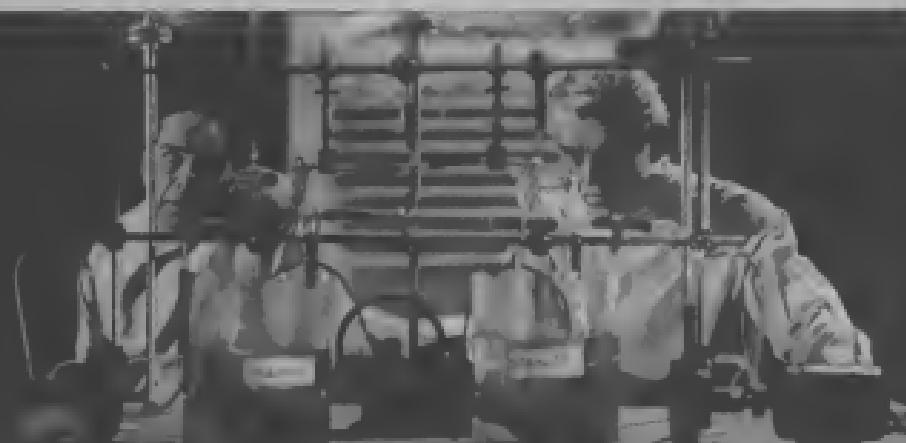
As a rule, one o'clock generally signalled the completion of the makeup session. Then Karloff and Pierce would sit down to a lunch before it came time for Karloff to thump off to the soundstage for sometimes as many as eight hours of acting. Jack Pierce always went with him, staying on the set during filming to touch up makeup that might become streaked because of the intense heat from the movie klieg lights.

All told, Karloff's makeup at the Frankenstein

monster weighed sixty-two pounds, and on screen he towered a gigantic seven feet, seven inches. Of this height, seven inches had been added to his head by the large flat domed skull of the Monster and nine inches to his feet by the cumbersome shoes. While making *The Bride of Frankenstein*, Karloff had to receive Infra-Red treatment and massage to stimulate the circulation in his legs and arms and to relieve pains in an injured left side because he had hurt himself during filming of the very first scene in the film, where he drowned the bargemaster in the flooded cellar of an old windmill.

With the production of the films running anywhere from six weeks to three months, and with Karloff having to be subjected each and every working day to the rather tiresome and strenuous ritual of a six and seven hour makeup session, he said his actor's endurance was sorely tested. But he never complained about his ordeals playing the Monster either in front of the camera or behind it. In 1931, he said, getting that role was a big break for him and all through the years following his enormous success in *Frankenstein* people will tell you he always had nothing but a good, decent word to say about the Monster, generally referring to the Monster as his dear old friend. In 1931, he said during our talk, he was still a struggling actor, hardly known by anyone but his friends and a few casting directors, and he was already into his forties and seriously wondering what — if anything at all — the future really held for his career. But thanks to *Frankenstein's* director James Whale, the makeup genius of Jack Pierce, and frankly, Bela Lugosi, who had turned down the role when it had originally been offered him, Karloff's career in films soared after *Frankenstein* as he went on to become not only one of the more famous actors of the world but also one of the most respected actors, by people both in and out of his profession.

NEXT ISSUE: MORE ON THE MOST FAMOUS MOVIE-MONSTER OF ALL TIME! BE HERE!



There was one more Universal Frankenstein though Karloff appeared; not in the monster's castle but in the "Mad Doctor" with J. Carrol Naish as the "Hunchback". This was "House of Frankenstein", 1944.

# MONSTERS of the RADIO

By Jim Harmon

Giant bats, Frankenstein, prehistoric creatures, ghosts, ghouls, zombies — they were all part of the great old days of radio drama. Many were adapted to the

Everybody knows that the monsters on the radio dramas of the thirties and forties were the most fearsome ever created — because they were created by the imagination of the listener. Magic has always relied on the use of the imagination. Voodoo, like witchcraft, depends on the victim's own imagination. Radio was magic, and it had millions of willing victims.

The great radio programs gave their listeners plenty of food for thought, plenty of material to use to build their

own personal monsters. Outstanding actors, writers, directors supplied the bare skeleton in all its essentials.

The Martians, for instance — they were probably the worst things that slithered into living rooms during the Golden Age of radio. They were wet, leather-skinned things with one gaping slit that might have been a mouth. Their testicles were bad enough, but their heat rays were even worse. They could reduce a man to a pile of ashes. Those rays almost incinerated the whole of



*At Latitude Zero* lies the island where Cesar Romero triumphantly creates the Griffin, the legendary winged lion, with the help of a beautiful assistant and one not quite so charming. This is the 1970 movie adaption of the vintage radio show.



Orson Welles leads the cast on one of his Mercury Theatre radio broadcasts. *The War of the Worlds* was the most famous show of the series. Thousands of people looked out their windows to see the Martian invaders coming.

Earth civilization. At least, they did in Orson Welles' radio adaptation of H.G. Wells' *War of the Worlds* on the Mercury Theatre series.

The then-boyish Orson Welles created these monstrosities out of a documentary-type script that seemed like a series of newscasts and special bulletins. It convinced tens of thousands of listeners that these events were real — that the Martians really were destroying New York City and visiting other areas. *Living pictures* repeats of the famous broadcast on FM and online.

stations quite regularly and even buy copies of it on LP albums. The drama does not have the same effect on us today, because we are not living in 1938. We have heard or seen hundreds of dramatic presentations involving some of these techniques. We are not expecting attack any longer from Hitler's Germany at anyhow. To people in 1938 it all seemed very real. George Pal produced a fine motion picture version of *War of the Worlds* with outstanding special effects of the Martians in their saucer-like spacecraft, but millions of dollars spent never quite duplicated the effect of terror created for a few hundred dollars in a small radio studio by a few actors standing at microphones and a sound-effects man simulating such noises as the spaceship hatch opening with a few pots and pans.

For this same Mercury-Theatre-on-the-Air series, Orson Welles also did several other monster shows—but without the documentary approach that had created panic. They were “conventional” dramas with music and narration and they were exceptionally well-done ones. There was a version of *Frankenstein*, but no traces of it remain in the form of known recordings or scripts. Collectors, such as your editor, have some Mercury Theatre recordings. I own the original studio disc recordings of *War of the Worlds* made at the time of the original broadcast, and I have a tape of Welles’ version of *Dowseus*. The radio adaptation follows Beam Stoker’s novel quite faithfully. Due to the unique qualities of radio, Welles is able to play both Dr. Van Helsing and Count Dracula. Many actors were adept enough at changing their voices to play more than one character on a radio play. Welles was also aided by a special filter device he used in speaking the words of Count Dracula. The effect might be described as a voice coming through the strings of a very old violin. The result was chilling.

Of course, Orson Welles had the experience of speaking through another filter device when he played The Shadow on radio. The "Desculs"-voice box was almost a ~~peculiar old telephone receiver but the one~~ The Shadow was the familiar one used for a telephone effect.

on dramatic radio — and also for ghosts, the voice of conscience, etc. At times, it was difficult to tell whether a filtered voice was supposed to be a spook or merely a telephone call from Uncle Frank. Yet somehow the words of *The Shadow* and the way he spoke them always suggested something a bit more eerie than an ordinary phone call.

The mysterious side to the forces of law and order, The Shadow, as portrayed by Welles and later actors, Bill Johnson and Bret Morrison, encountered many monstrous creatures in his adventures. There were zombies, werewolves, vampires, ghosts of every description, Frankenstein-like beings, visitors from other planets, and on. In the story called *Death Proof by Night*, The Shadow encountered a sinister doctor who was a werewolf, and who was determined on getting The Shadow's friend and companion, the lovely Margo Lane, to join him on his nightly prowlings as another wolf creature. He dared challenge The Shadow's hypnotic power with his own, but needless to say, there is only one Master of Men's Minds.

One of the programs of radio most loaded with supernatural creatures was *I Love a Mystery*, written and produced by Carlton E. Morse. There were three Columbia movies in the 1940s based on the radio series, but they only suggested the thrills and the quality of the broadcasts. The movie versions of famous radio shows, novels, and comic strips somehow were often not nearly as good as the original source material. A much more recent TV movie using the title of *I Love a Mystery* was really nothing more than a parody or satire of the original, produced at about the time of the *Batman* "camp" craze and not released until some years later.

Jack, Doo, and Raggie were originally played by Michael Raffetto, Barton Barbourgh, and Walter Winters when the program started in Hollywood in 1939. Ten years later, the program was revived after a few years off the air with a new cast from New York City. Russell Thorson, Jim Boles, and Tony Randall. While the star of *The Odd Couple* may be the only name familiar to most readers, all of these men were fine actors with outstanding voices and skills. The roles of gruff old-man Jack, good-natured Texas Doo, and chivalrous Raggie were similar to many of the stereotype heroes of the day on the surface, but they had the depth of real people. No matter how far out the stories got, with whatever monsters in whatever exotic setting, it all seemed to be happening to real flesh-and-blood people, thanks to the genius of Carlton Morse, the show still lives in the memories of many grown-up boys twenty and forty years after the first broadcast.

Supernatural beings or visitors from outer space played part in most of the afternoon adventure shows for kids on radio — *Buck Rogers*, *Supernan*, *Captain Midnight*, even in the adventures of cowboy *Tom Mix* — at one weekly program of this sort abounded with monsters. That was the legendary *Latitude Zero* created by Ted Sherdeman. Again, it was the characteristics of large and varied cast (including Howard Duff) that made believable the island that lay at "Latitude Zero" and which was populated by mad scientists, zombies, living lions and other interesting neighbors. A recent Japanese movie of *Latitude Zero* did not seem to spare the budget in order to bring these fabled creatures to the screen.

Practically every continuing character on radio labbled in fantasy or science fiction at one time or another — in one episode, The Lone Ranger discovered atomic energy at about the time of the Civil War — but not of the monsters of radio could be found in the many science anthology dramas. Before television's *Twilight Zone*, *Dimension X* was the most popular science-fiction soap. *X Minus One*, *Quiet Please and Lights Out*.





The Shadow, radio's mystery man in a Columbia movie serial scene, is hauling some of his victims back into the shadows. On the air, he faced werewolves and vampires nearly as often as gangsters. (Under the slouch hat, it is Victor Jory.)

Arch Oboler was a skilled dramatist who has gone on into films, producing such *late Show* regulars as *Bwana Devil*, *Five*, and *The Twenty*. On radio, he was one of the very few writers the average listener knew by name. They knew Norman Corwin wrote elaborate, poetic presentations, often of an overwhelmingly patriotic nature, and they knew Arch Oboler wrote stories of horror, terror, and monsters that were better left unseen.

Oboler began his career doing an NBC series called *Lights Out*. Another fine writer, Willis Cooper actually began the program and some outstanding shows by Cooper are mistakenly credited to Oboler by those remembering the series. Of course, Oboler had an equal or greater number of expertly chilling stories himself.

His first script was nearly his last, Oboler has revealed. After placing an occasional script here and there, Oboler was given a chance to write his own program every week. The first story he did for this new series of *Lights Out* was one involving a young girl who has been mistakenly buried alive. For the half hour she pleaded with all those who could not hear her — her mother, father, neighbors

— to dig her up. No one heard her — except a few million radio listeners. Many of the audience were outraged. It had sounded uncomfortably real. They did not like to think of such things.

Network executives seemed to be pondering Oboler's future, but finally he was given the signal to continue writing his series, but to exercise more careful thought in selecting the subjects for his scripts.

Through the late thirties and the forties, Arch Oboler turned out hundreds of tales to be listened to in the dark — radio plays about a mother-in-law who is dropped down a well but who climbs out a few months later; about a public executioner who will hang anybody for a price, even his own son; about giant worms which will devour civilization; about a hole in the ground that keeps growing mile-by-mile to devour civilization; and his most famous story, one about a chicken heart, kept alive in a jar in a laboratory, which escapes and starts to grow room-by-room, block-by-block, mile-by-mile until it threatens to devour civilization. (Yes, most writers do seem to repeat favorite themes.)



Jack Palance (as Banion) and Doc Long (Burton Yarborough, the original radio star) look at a shrunken head in *The Devil's Mask*, a 1945 Columbia picture.

Oboler knew how to handle the monster the audience sympathizes with, such as with the movies' Frankenstein monster and King Kong. In one play he wrote of *The Ugliest Man in the World*, who began as the Ugliest Boy in the World. He was a character anyone who had ever had a problem with acne, or had been too skinny, or too fat, could automatically identify with.

PAUL (speaking in a low voice): My face... can I bear the memory of my face?... A brow? No brow! A thing that sloped away sharply — quickly — like a peaked roof half fallen in! Nose? A thick wad of ugly flesh protruding out between two close-set eyes! My eyes — my eyes — Mother of God, my eyes! Two stay red-rimmed green-flecked globes that stood far out beyond the lids and twinkled like a fat round pig's! My eyes! That was why they laughed at me! My eyes!

VOICE (Doubtfully in *close*): Ugliest Man in the World!

PAUL: The world outside — at last I had to go out into it — make a living — get a job...

VOICE: Job — you want a job?

PAUL: Job...

VOICE: Say, 'ya think I'm runnin' a circus sideshow?

Paul did have his problems, but he did seem to be on the right track. He was best suited to be an actor on radio. However, his final solution was a bit more ominous.

For years, I was asked if I thought old-time radio dramas would come back. Today, college students at my lectures tell me all about how it is coming back. Most of the revival is in the form of reissues of such old favorites as *The Shadow* and *Green Hornet* distributed by Charles Michaelson, Inc., out of New York. Arch Oboler has a package of his plays under the title *The Devil and Mr. O.* Many other old programs are replayed without authorization.

Several new programs have appeared. In syndication, there is *Hollywood Radio Theatre* presents *Zero Hour* (people invariably refer to it as either the first part or last of the title). This half-hour series is hosted by Rod Serling and directed by radio veteran Elliot Lewis. It features stories of mystery and suspense performed by such varied artists as Patry Duke, Richard Crenna, Edgar Bergen (without Charlie McCarthy), Howard Da Silva (with the same voice he used as radio's Sam Spade), and Kenan Wynn. On CBS radio stations in most major cities is the *CBS Radio Mystery Theatre*. This 52-minute show, on seven nights a week, is really an expanded revival of *Inner Sanctum*, produced by that series' creator, Hinman Brown, and beginning and ending with the famous eerily squeaking door. Over half of these new *Mystery Theatre* plays involve monsters — vampires, witches, ghosts, and good stuff like that.

With these first of new programs, and with record albums and tapes being available from many dealers and collectors, radio drama has itself risen from the dead like a favorite monster.

Michael Rafferty and Burton Yarborough as Jack and Doc on radio's saga of human and inhuman monsters, *I Love a Mystery*.



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IS IT TRUE, MR. ROLAND,  
YOU'VE UPPED YOUR PRICE  
TO A MILLION PER MOVIE?

SUPPLY AND  
DEMAND,  
CHARLIE!

DON'T YOU READ  
KARENNE'S BOY?

JASON'S LAST  
HORROR PIC  
BROKE ALL  
RECORDS!

TELL 'EM,  
STELLA!

SAY... WHAT'S  
THE SECRET OF  
THAT FANTASTIC  
MAKEUP YOU WEAR  
MR. ROLAND?

SORRY, KIDDIES...  
THAT'LL HAVE TO  
STAY MY LITTLE  
TRAP SECRET!

BESIDES, I'M GIVING  
UP PLAYING MONSTERS!  
MY NEXT PICTURE I PLAY  
STRAIGHT!

JASON! YOU  
NEVER TOLD  
ME...?  
YOU NEVER  
ASKED ME,  
BABY!

NOW RUN ALONG,  
PEOPLE... 'CAUSE  
WE'RE SHOOTING  
THE FINAL  
SCENE TO  
MORROW...

... AND I WANT TO LOOK  
GOOD FOR MY FAREWELL  
APPEARANCE AS A MOVIE  
MONSTER!

NEXT YEAR,  
YOU'LL ALL  
BE INTERVIEW-  
ING JASON  
ROLAND...  
MATINEE  
IDOL!

THERE! THAT OUGHT TO... YOU!!

DON'T WORRY, MY  
DEAR MR. ROLAND! NO  
ONE SAW ME ENTER!

DEBT? WHY  
YOU SHAMED-  
OFF LITTLE  
FOOL!

I DIDN'T SIGN  
ANYTHING... SO  
YOU CAN JUST  
GET OUT!

I TOLD  
YOU NEVER  
TO COME  
HERE! WHAT  
IF...?

NO ONE ELSE  
WILL LEARN THAT  
IT IS MY GENIUS  
THAT HAS MADE  
YOU A STAR...  
NOT YOUR OWN!

I MERELY  
CAME TO  
REMIND YOU  
THAT... TO  
MORROW  
...I SHALL  
COLLECT  
MY DEBT!

NOW NOW,  
MR. ROLAND...

I SAID  
GET  
OUT!!



YES... JASON  
ROLAND... I  
SHALL LEAVE  
ALL RIGHT

STILL, IF YOU BELIEVE A HERE  
LEGAL TECHNICALITY WILL  
STOP ME FROM COLLECTING  
MY RIGHFUL DEBT...

...THAT MISERABLE,  
MISSHENPEN SOMEBODY!

I WAS A  
HOBGOBLIN  
WHEN I  
MET HIM—  
A TWO-BIT  
EXTRA!

AND WITHOUT  
HIM, I'LL STILL BE  
ALMOSOTY WALLOW-  
ING IN THE MUD  
AND THE FIRE!



FOR, THOUGH NO ONE  
KNOWS IT, IT'S A  
MAKUP THAT HAS  
MADE ME HOLLYWOOD'S  
REIGNING MONSTER  
KING!

THEY CALL ME  
THE GREATEST  
SINCE LON  
CHANEY...

WHAT A  
LAUGH!

I COULDN'T PAINT  
MY TOENAILS WITHOUT  
HIS HELP!



NEXT MORNING, THE DAWN BREAKS ON THE FINAL DAY OF FILMING....!

THOSE HINNLE FINGERS...  
THAT SPECIAL MUSK  
WHICH YOU APPLY AND  
REMOVE EACH DAY...

WHO ARE  
YOU, MANT  
WHERE DO YOU  
COME FROM?

I HAVE ANSWERED  
THAT QUESTION BEFORE,  
ROLAND!

YOU DIDN'T THINK I  
BELIEVED THAT MOTT,  
DID YOU?

SURE I PROMISED  
YOU ANY ONE THING  
YOU WANTED WHEN I  
BECAME FAMOUS...  
BUT WE ONLY  
SHOOK ON IT,  
REMEMBER?

AND WHAT WAS  
THAT ONE THING, FOOL?  
YOU NEVER SAW!

YOU  
DO NOT  
LIKE MY  
ANSWER  
THEN... AND  
YOU WOULD  
NOT LIKE IT  
NOW!

OH YES...  
YOU'RE AN EMISSARY  
OF THE EVIL, YOU  
ONCE TOLD ME.



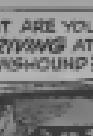


DUSK...ON THAT LAST DAY OF SHOOTING...?

ROLAND STARTED HIS HOME-MONSTER CAREER AS A MYSTERY MAN...

AND IT LOOKS LIKE HE'S GOING TO END IT THE SAME WAY, EH, STELLA?

WHAT ARE YOU DRIVING AT, HERSHOUND?



YOU LYING BUM'S GOTTA GO...

CUT!

THAT'S A TAKE!

WHAT'S WRONG, BABY? STEP ON A HORNET?

I DON'T SAY HE WAS A FAKE LADY!

AND SO IS HOLLOW... MINE FOR THE TAKING!

THIS CREEP SAYS YOU'RE A FAKE, JADE... THAT'S ALL!

BUT THERE'S RUMORS FLOATING AROUND, ROLAND, THAT YOU DON'T DO YOUR OWN MONSTER MAKEUP.

RUMORS LIKE THAT CAN BE BAD FOR A GUY'S IMAGE!

SIMPLY, CHARLIE! I'M GOING INTO MY DRESSING ROOM THERE...

HOW ABOUT A KISS, BABY... FOR THE SHUTTERBOY?



SO, I'D BETTER SCOTCH 'EM, ONCE AND FOR ALL!

NOW, PAL... SINCE YOU JUST RETIRED AS THE NEW HARLOU?



AND WHEN I COME OUT, YOUR PHOTOS CAN GET A SHOT OF ME WITH MY MAKEUP HALF ON AND HALF OFF! WHAT'S MORE, I'LL EXPLAIN ALL MY LITTLE SECRETS FOR THAT SCANDAL SHEET OF YOURS! OKAY?

SOUNDS FAIR ENOUGH TO ME, STAR-MAN!

THE MORNING EDITIONS WILL EAT THIS UP!

THE MORNING EDITIONS WILL EAT THIS UP!

IN THAT GET-UP ARE YOU KIDDING?



TAKE IT OFF... AND THEN WE MAKE LIKE LOVEBIRDS!

THEN, IN THE DARK  
EXCLUSION OF  
HIS PRESSING  
ROOM...

SHOULD BE EASY TO FAKE MY  
WAY THRU AN EXPLANATION OF  
MY "MAKEUP TECHNIQUES"!

AND SINCE I'M NEVER  
GOING TO PUT IT ON AGAIN...

ALL I'VE GOT TO  
DO IS PEEL OFF  
THIS GUNK, AND...

IN FACT... NOTHING'S  
DOING ANY GOOD!

THIS STUFF IS  
STICKING TO ME...  
LIKE A SECOND  
SKIN!

HMM...  
THIS  
CREAM  
ISN'T  
DOING ANY  
GOOD!

THEN... THAT WAS  
THE LITTLE GUY'S  
SECRET!

HE SAID... THE DEVIL  
WANTED ME... ONE WAY  
OR ANOTHER!

HE... HE DIDN'T  
JUST MAKE ME  
UP... HE TURNED ME  
INTO WHATEVER  
MONSTER I WAS  
PLAYING!

BUT ONLY HE COULD CHARGE  
ME BACK... AND I KICKED  
HIM OUT!

PIP YOU HEAR SOME  
KIND OF CRY FROM  
INSIDE, MISS HOLLOWAY?

I... I THOUGHT  
SO... BUT I MUST  
BE WRONG!

BECAUSE, WHAT I  
HEARD... DON'T EVEN  
SOUND HUMAN!

IT... WON'T...  
COME... OFF...!!

HOW HE GOT ME...  
FOR THE REST OF  
MY LIFE?

MR. ROLAND?

WE'RE  
WAITING,  
SIS...

AND THEY WAITED FOR  
A LONG, LONG TIME...  
BEFORE THEY FINALLY  
CUT FOR COFFEE...!

BEYOND THE OUTER LIMITS OF TERROR COMES...



THE HAUNT OF **Horror**

# The Weird World of Real-Life Monsters

By Ron Heydock

It is historical fact that there was a Frankenstein castle, a nobleman named Count Dracula, that thousands of people have seen prehistoric monsters in Scotland and in Northern California! Here's a Monsters of the Movies scoop, reported by Ron Heydock, himself a horror movie star in such films as *The Chooper*, a very youthful pioneer in rock music whose early recordings are collector's items, and author of many articles and books.

In the movies, Frankenstein, Dracula, The Body Snatcher and such gauching horrors as the gigantic Loch Ness Monster and The Hound of the Baskervilles are legend. In everyday reality, though, such infamous moatland horrors are not mere fancy but documented fact. They really have existed. Take Frankenstein for example. Or rather, his castle.

Far beyond being only a motion picture and literary myth, Frankenstein's Castle may be found by the curious high atop a long, narrow range of hills located between the valley of the Rhine and the mountainous Odenwald west of the village of Niederbeerbach in Germany. The

*The head of the Frankenstein family created the Monster as portrayed by Glenn Strange according to *House of Frankenstein*, Universal, 1944. The Frankenstein family and their castle actually existed and still exist today!*

*At first the monster.*

castle was built in 1252—complete with a large courtyard, surrounding wall, moat and a drawbridge—by a young Baron of the Frankenstein family who had obtained the choice mountaintop property by cannily marrying the wealthy lady who owned it. Once this castle was built, however, young Baron Frankenstein did not then set about creating a monster in the dangerous basements of his fortress. The original, true life Baron Frankenstein was not a monster maker at all. Still, the Frankenstein family is responsible in no little measure for contributing to the legend of the scientist Dr. Frankenstein, who's madlike creation has become world famous through novels and films, short stories and plays.

Because—according to Baron Clement von Frankenstein, a family descendant—it seems that when Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley penned her immortal novel, *Frankenstein*, she borrowed his family's name for her tale, dropping the "e" from the original spelling.

"Mary Shelley knew of my ancestors," the Baron claimed to this writer. "She used our family name for her character, Victor Frankenstein." He went on, adding that his father, who had been the Austrian ambassador to the Court of St. James in London from 1920 to 1938, considered all the many Frankenstein movies something of a joke. "My father thought the movies were very entertaining," he said.

Baron Clement himself is in the movies today, including guest appearances on *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.*, *The Sophs* and *The Avengers*. Oddly enough, though, he said he isn't often approached to appear in horror films.

*The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms*, Ray Bradbury's famous movie creature, bears a striking resemblance to the allegedly real-life Loch Ness Monster.



That casting call may come, though. In fact, it seems inevitable. After all, he smiled, "lots of people think my father was Boris Karloff. They keep asking me what happened to my electrodes!"

But even though the original real-life Baron Frankenstein never created a monster in his castle, Castle Frankenstein itself has its own history of a legendary demon St. George and the Dragon, a myth that's known the world over, and a myth that began when Baron George Frankenstein, a descendant of the original Lord of the Castle, rescued a forester's daughter, Ann Mary, from a terrible man-eating monster that had been roaming loose in the countryside surrounding the Castle. During the crucial battle with the demon, Baron George suffered a fatal knee wound and died shortly afterwards. He was buried in the church in the nearby village of Niederbeerbach, where his tomb still stands today. Unfortunately, the actual Frankenstein Castle is in ruins; there have been many attempted restorations through the years—including a renovation in 1966—but all the projects fell through, for one reason or another.

One of the most famous monsters in both fact and fiction has always been the Loch Ness Monster. Over the years many people have claimed to have actually seen this weird monster swimming in Scotland's Loch Ness, and magazines and books have occasionally published various photographs of the elusive beastie. The photos, however, have generally been taken from some distance away and they're either a little blurry to the eye, or the actual shape and form of the creature is indistinct. Still—in at least one photo I saw—you could definitely make out the shape of what looked rather like a large prehistoric aquatic water dinosaur, not unlike the giant monster in Ray Bradbury's classic story, *The Foghorn* (on which the 1953 horror film, *The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms*, was based). Perhaps, like Bradbury's movie monster, the Loch Ness Monster had been frozen alive for millions of years until more recent centuries, when it thawed out and returned to active life.

The *Private Life of Sherlock Holmes* (1970), on the other hand, offered a somewhat different explanation of the creature: it was, at the turn of the century, nothing more than a secret miniature submarine that was being tested in the Loch Ness by the British Government, "some sort of underwater vessel, disguised as a monster to mislead the gullible... an experimental model, operated by a crew of midgets," said Sherlock Holmes to Dr. Watson.

This explanation of the Loch Ness Monster in the Billy Wilder-L.A.L. Diamond, *Sherlock Holmes*, script is fanciful, of course. Far too many sightings have been made—and are still being made today—to discount the creature's existence. In 1970, a London insurance company even offered a reward of two million dollars to anyone who could capture the Loch Ness Monster. There were rumors that the company had plans to put the monster on exhibition throughout the world, just as the fictional movie producer, Carl Denham, had exhibited the giant ape *King Kong*. To this day, however, nobody has claimed the reward. And the Loch Ness Monster is still on the loose.

Besides encountering Scotland's legendary Loch Ness Monster, Sherlock Holmes has presented the world with an original horror monster of his own, courtesy of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, a novel which has been filmed as many as eight times to

date, beginning in 1915 with a French silent, Basil Rathbone, Peter Cushing, Stewart Granger, Carolyn Blackwell, Robert Rendell and Eddie Norwood have all faced the fearsome hound as Sherlock Holmes in the various screen adaptations of the novel.

Conan Doyle tells how the master detective Sherlock Holmes and his good friend and associate Dr. Watson encounter the devil beast of the Baskervilles when they undertake a rather singular case involving a strange, terrifying legend about a phantom ghost dog that prowls the fog shrouded moors of Devonshire, England, an area swept by the wild, chill winds off the bleak Devon moors of nearby Dartmoor. According to the legend, Holmes and Watson are told, the ghostly hound was originally a very large dog owned by the Baskervilles family; one night on the moors, he destroyed his beloved mistress' husband after the enraged man had murdered her. It seems he believed she was being unfaithful to him with one of the men in the village. The dog also died that fateful night and since then, as the legend says, the horrendous figure of the hound may be seen out on the moors on nights of the full moon, howling in lonesome agony for its slain mistress.

The legend on which Conan Doyle based his novel was—and is—an actual British west country legend; it only differs in respect to the name of the family that owned the dog. For the novel, Conan Doyle borrowed the name of Baskerville from Harry Baskerville, the grouch of writer-journalist B. Fixxie Robinson—a friend of Doyle's who first told him the legend of the phantom hound as they travelled together by horse and carriage

Actress Jay Wilkerson is cuddled up with Big Foot in the Gemini-American release *Big Foot*.



Big Foot stands tall against the down sky on location in Northern California. Photo by Anthony Corrado, from *Big Foot*, 1971.



over those same desolate moors of Devonshire with Harry Baskerville at the reins.

Besides non-human monsters like the Loch Ness and Baskerville demons, there have been many all-too-human monsters roaming loose in this oftentimes baffling world of ours, where truth may indeed be stranger than fiction. Besides the hideously cruel tyrant like Vlad Tepe, London's maniac harlot killer, Jack the Ripper, and infamous grave robbers, the notorious Burke and Hare, have also contributed much to cinematic horror fiction. Boris Karloff and Christopher Lee, in fact, both starred in one fine film adaptation of the Burke and Hare atrocities, *Corridors of Blood* (1962). Some years earlier, though, Karloff had epitomized the generally despicable men who took to the trade of grave-robbing: he starred as Goy in *The Body Snatcher* (1944), with Bela Lugosi co-starring for producer Val Lewton.

During the eighteenth century in England, grave robbing was something of a common practice and seen like Karloff's *Gray* had themselves quite a flourishing business going; because doctors in those days desperately needed fresh bodies for dissection, in order that they might teach young medical students more about how to heal the living. Unfortunately, robbing graves was against the law, and so, the doctors were forced to hire body snatchers, who earned extra money for themselves by stealing corpses from graveyards, or—as many of them did—made their entire living by excavating freshly buried men and women. Doctors of the time paid much for these corpses.

Today the human body is worth less than one dollar.

Big Foot tangles with a bear in the California timber country in the *Big Foot* feature film.



Guess who's peeking at you in *Big Foot*?

but back in Gray's time physicians paid body snatchers as much as fifty dollars for an adult, thirty five for a child. The body snatchers made extra money for themselves by knocking out all the teeth before selling the corpses. They sold the teeth to dentists who then used them as false teeth in plates and bridges.

The body snatchers usually received a standard price of ten dollars for the teeth.

      #      #      #

Most of the great ghoulish tales, I've discovered, come from the old countries of Europe. The forests and mountains of Germany, Hungary, Austria and Poland are fairly teeming with all sorts of ghastly legends about vampires and werewolves, ghosts and other demon creatures. The United States, oddly enough, doesn't seem to have had that much success evolving its own monster lore. Even domestic horror films are mainly concerned with tales that have—in one form or another—generally originated from wild superstition ridden European territories like the Black Forest, the Carpathian Mountains and, of course, fabled Transylvania.

Still, there are some rather powerful tales being told about creatures and strange beings running amok in the States. Up in northern California, for example, rumor has it there exists a lost race of Lemurians, descendants of long lost Atlantis, living somewhere in the Mount Shasta range. Every so often someone will spot a Lemurian, but unfortunately, no one yet has had an opportunity to take any sort of reasonably good photograph, or have a conversation with any member of this secluded lost race of humans.

The *Big Foot* monster also haunts the wilds of northern California. A gargantuan shaggy-looking manbeast with, one assumes, big feet. *Big Foot* has been seen by hunters in the northern woods, tracking small animals for nourishment. Various university and foundation expeditions have gone searching for *Big Foot* but, like the Lemurians, he still remains a mystery as to who or what he actually may be. In *Big Foot* (1971), movie producer Anthony Cardozo offered the explanation that the creature is actually the Missing Link. John

Carradine, Ken Maynard, Joy Wickerson and Chris Mitchum starred in Cardozo's color film, and much of the horror movie's exterior photography was filmed right up there in northern California's *Big Foot* country.

What with *Baron Frankenstein's Castle* in Germany, though, *Vlad Tepes* in Hungary, the *Loch Ness Monster* in Scotland, *Jack the Ripper* and the *Body Snatchers* in London and *Big Foot* in California, who says monster movies are nothing but horrifying make-believe?

H



*Big Foot seems to be going down for the last time.*

SPECIAL MONSTERS OF THE MOVIES MINI-SERIES BONUS!

# OUT OF THE MOUTHS OF GHOULS!

PART 2 BY STAN LEE



That was Don Rickles—  
and now for  
my Ed Sullivan  
imitation...



Okay, you win!  
We'll watch Kung Fu...  
instead of the  
Waltons!



Okay, Charlie.  
It's a  
G-rated  
movie.





What's the  
big deal?  
*Lots of*  
guys have  
acne.

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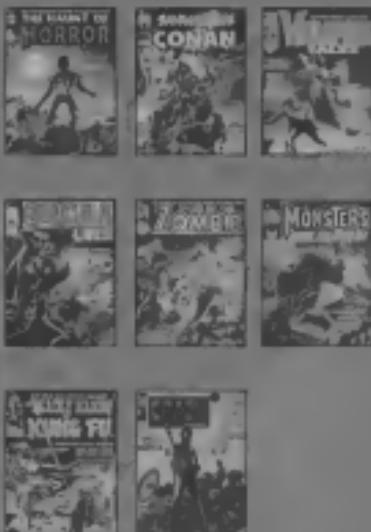
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Bela Lugosi, the original screen Dracula, recreated his role by name only once more, here with Glenn Strange as the Monster and Lenore Ulric, in *Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein*.

# THE Dracula RIP-OFFS

By Donald F. Glut

If you meet a tall man in a cloak with nice white fangs and eyes that burn into yours, and he tells you he is Dracula and asks you if you want to buy one of his personalized lunch boxes — beware! He may not really be Dracula at all! Learn how to spot frauds from Donald F. Glut (whose name rhymes with "root" not "rul"), the author of *The Frankenstein Legend* hardcover book and *The Dracula Book* soon forthcoming, who has been looking at horror movies and making his own since he was in his teens, not many years ago. (Well, not too many, anyhow!)



There were other vampires in the original *Dracula* movie — the Count's several wives closing in on the unsuspecting Dwight Frye. The castle sure must have had to put out a long line of gothamite laundry on the line.

A tall figure, dressed in formal black and draped in a flowing cloak, emerges from the twisting fog. The face of the figure is of chalk, with intense eyes of demonic fire and lips of sanguine crimson. There is an unsettling familiarity in that pallid visage for it is the face of Count Dracula, the King Vampire and Master of the Undead.

That was what audiences saw in 1935. The face was recognizable as that of Bela Lugosi who, four years earlier, had donned their celluloid collars in the original Universal *Dracula*. Now, in 1955, Lugosi appeared much the same as he had in that first sound *Dracula* film, still wearing the black winglike mantle, still apparently on

the night prowl in search of human blood. Yet there were slight differences in 1935, including a ruffled shirt and a conspicuous bullet wound in the temple. There was also a different title for the film with no mention of the celebrated Count Dracula of Transylvania.

*Mark of the Vampire* was made by MGM in 1935 and directed by Tod Browning, the man who brought the atmospheric *Dracula* to the screen in 1931. The film has the distinction of being the first in a seemingly endless string of Dracula "rip-off" productions — motion pictures featuring vampires with such names as Count Mora and Count Laud who, if they happened to be stalking down the street, might understandably be recognized as the unsinkable Dracula himself.

Students of authentic vampire lore note that few vampires are wealthy Transylvanian noblemen with the funds to parade about eternally attired in tuxedos and opera cape and spending the daylight hours in the opulence of a castle tomb. The cleaning bill alone from sleeping daily in a layer of native soil would prove beyond the means of the average traditional vampire, as pointed out by Charles Beaumont in his hilarious short story "Blood Brother" (see *The Playboy Book of Science Fiction and Fantasy*, 1966).

There are myriad other disadvantages for a vampire to

emulate Count Dracula by mimicking his dress. Any pale-faced character walking about in formal wear and cape in today's world would automatically be looked upon as a vampire (to believers) or some crackpot masquerading as a vampire (to most of us skeptics).

Then why do they do it? Why would a vampire whose very existence depends on secrecy and efficiency go to the trouble of wearing an immaculate tux and cape and calling undue attention to himself? Certainly his motives do not stem from hero worship of Count Dracula. And why don't the producers of these non-Dracula films simply change their titles and call their cloaked noblemen Count Dracula?

The answer to both of these questions is the same and lies back in the mists that enshrouded Universal Pictures back in 1931.

Universal's Count Dracula differs in appearance from the King Vampire in Bram Stoker's famous novel. This Lugosi conception was, in fact, established on the stage by Hamilton Deane, who wrote the *Dracula* stage play in 1924. Deane clothed the Count in black tux and opera cape and patterned his face after his own. (Eventually Deane himself assumed the stage role of Count Dracula.) Actres like Raymond Huntley and Bela Lugosi propagated this image in the theatre. And when Lugosi

made the switch-over to motion pictures, he brought along that Deane-inspired portrayal of the Count.

Universal Pictures, naturally copyrighted that image so that no other studio could legally make a film featuring a Dracula in the Deane/Lugosi image.

The results of this copyright were threefold: Other studios used the Dracula name and character but shied away from the Universal image (e.g. American-International's *Blood of Dracula*, a 1957 low-budget movie featuring a girl who occasionally transforms into a vampire even in bright daylight, and United Artists' *Return of Dracula*, in which Francis Lederer played the original Count but wore a straight business suit with an overcoat draped capelike about his shoulders). The second result was that many producers, primarily the makers of inexpensive serialisation films or foreign pictures not subject to American copyright laws, went ahead to use the Universal conception of the Count. The last result of Universal's copyright is that other studios used the caped noblemen image of the vampire but avoided the name of Count Dracula. This third result has necessitated the creation of an Undead legion of Dracula imitators. And everyone except the men at the copyright office in Washington can see beyond these vampires' forced aliases.

Christopher Lee is impotent for his evening repast *Dracula — Prince of Darkness*. At last — the real thing!

Left: Bela Lugosi as Count Mora clutches the shoulders of Carol Borland as Lorna in the misty countryside of *Mark of the Vampire*, Tod Browning's MGM film.

Behind the webbing, Luna (Carol Borland), Sir Karel Bonamy (Volonte Heribert) and Count Mora (Bela Lugosi) strike a pose for a family portrait in *Mark of the Vampire*.





Reacting to the symbol of Christianity, Christopher Lee shows a more flexible acting range to a new generation of horror fans in *Taste the Blood of Dracula*.

Count Mora was Lugosi's vampiric role in *Mark of the Vampire*. To anyone entering the theatre after the rolling of the credits, this might appear to be a Dracula film. But as the film progresses we learn that the Count is not 'The Count' and that he has apparently been doomed to Undeath because of his suicide. Count Mora prowls a gloomy old estate, both in human or bat form, often accompanied by his daughter Lusa (Carol Berkland). The film has the slow direction of Browning's *Dracula* and it is disconcerting in the final denouement to learn that the "vampires" are actually actors working with a police detective to expose a very human murderer.

*Mark of the Vampire* was Tod Browning's remake of his own *London After Midnight*, an MGM silent film of 1927 starring the senior Lon Chaney. It is interesting to note that Browning did not go back to Chaney's conception of a wild-eyed, toothy, straw-haired vampire in a tall beaver hat. Lugosi's Count Dracula had established the image of the vampire upon the screen and perhaps, Browning was also attempting to recapture some of the glories of his 1931 classic. The result was the first film to rip-off the Dracula image. The picture was the pregaire of countless more.

It seems strange that although Bela Lugosi only portrayed Dracula twice on the screen (the other instance being in the 1948 Universal-International film *Abbott*

and Costello Meet Frankenstein) he remains to this day identified with the role. The Hungarian actor himself helped to propagate this image by ripping-off the infamous Count who first brought him to the notice of American filmgoers.

During 1941, when Lugosi was making his "Poverty Row" atrocities for PRC and Monogram, the latter studio starred him with the East Side Kids in *Spooks Run Wild*. Lugosi again donned his Dracula regalia and appears to be a killer called the "Monster," who sleeps in a coffin by day and comes out to drink blood at night. Does this sound like Monogram was trying to cash in on someone else's property?

Then wait...

For in 1944 Lugosi played the role of Armond Tesla in Columbia's *Return of the Vampire*. Surely Lugosi was portraying Count Dracula under a phony name in this action-filled hooper thriller. And certainly if Universal had filmed this story of a vampire and his werewolf slave, it would have been titled *Dracula Meets the Wolf Man*. Columbia not only ripped-off Dracula but also the entire Universal studio. Armond Tesla, though not even a nobleman, wore the required black tuxedo and cloak and leered menacingly with piercing eyes as Dracula did back in 1931. For the role of the werewolf Andreas the studio cast burly Mast Willis, who bore more than a superficial resemblance to Universal's Lon Chaney, Jr. Then Columbia presumed to imitate the Universal music and the style of direction that went into such films as *Frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man* and *House of Frankenstein*, made in 1943 and 1944 respectively.

Upon first inspection *Return of the Vampire* might be mistaken for a genuine Universal Dracula film.

Lugosi did not stop there. Although consigned to other studios often cast him in some of the most ignoble horror films ever made, his fans still wanted to see him as the bloodthirsty Count — or some reasonable facsimile. In 1952 he played Dracula again under the name of Baron Von Hottentot in the British comedy *My Son, the Vampire*. He was to star in another imitation Dracula film called *Tomb of the Vampire* when Death claimed him in 1956. Resourceful producer Edward D. Wood, Jr., who had shot some test scenes of the Dracula-clad Lugosi for this film, incorporated it into the legendary *Plan 9 from Outer Space* and released it to unsuspecting moviegoers in 1959, not only ripping-off Dracula but also the ticket money of the audiences.

Christopher Lee, the prolific Dracula of Hammer Films who altered the stale image of the vampire that had prospered since 1931, himself portrayed vampires other than Dracula but which immediately call to mind the Transylvanian Count. Unlike Lugosi, however, Lee's motivations are less monetary and more from sheer integrity. Lugosi's Dracula-type roles would have been Dracula roles if not for Universal's copyright. But Lee's portrayal of Dracula was his own. (When he made *Horror of Dracula* in 1958 he had not even 'seen' the Lugosi film of 1931.) His Dracula image was not in void of Universal's ownership rights and, therefore, he could have continued playing this type of Dracula for other studios. But he didn't.



*Above: The man who gave the curse of the Undead to Blacula in American International's film was none other than Count Dracula himself (Charles MacAvoy), pointing the way for his shambling army of bloodthirsty creatures.*

*William Marshall, one of the best actors in any kind of black film, performs as Blacula, attempting to add beautiful Janice Pennington to his growing rank of vampire slaves.*



Jonathan Rhys-Meyers as Barnabas Collins, the brooding vampire of TV's *Dark Shadows*. Dark Shadows is about to begin the chapter of Nancy Barrett as Carolyn Culver in MGM's (TV) spinoff, *House of Dark Shadows*.

The British actor has maintained a great fondness for the Dracula character and for the way in which he has portrayed him — a dynamic, feral, yet human vampire, always utterly confident, always noble. On occasion Lee has been asked to portray Count Dracula in non-Hammer films. Yet, except for a cameo appearance in *One More Time* (UA 1969), a performance as the Stoker Dracula in the 1971 film *Count Dracula*, and in the documentary *In Search of Dracula* in 1972, Lee has refused to play the actual Count outside the Hammer gates.

*Tempi Duri per i Vampiri* ("Hard Times for Vampires"), an Italian film of 1959 seen in the U.S. as *Uncle Was a Vampire*, was originally supposed to be titled *Hard Times for Dracula*. But this was a comedy. Christopher Lee agreed only to star as the vampire providing he was not called Dracula. Lee made subtle changes in costuming and make-up and spoke through an echo chamber in the dubbing for his role of the German vampire Baron Rodriguez. Still, even with these changes, the film ends with the Italian hit tune "Dracula Cha Cha Cha."

Ten years later, Lee played a Dracula-type vampire in *The Magic Christian*. Again he insisted on the character not being identified as Dracula. The "Ship's Vampire," as he was called in this comedy, is portrayed as the authentic article as he stalks, cape billowing majestically, through the *Magic Christian's* vessel. But there is an earlier scene in which the character is shown to cast a reflection in a mirror to show that he is, after all, a quite mortal actor.

If we were to publish a feature that discusses all of the Dracula rip-off films, we'd need more space than this article allows. For that you'll have to wait for my

upcoming book about Dracula. Yet we cannot conclude an article on Dracula imitations without some discussion of the vampire films made in Mexico.

The Mexican film studios are the most notorious for imitating (or plagiarizing, depending upon your disposition) the Americas Dracula movies of 1930s and '40s. Such sanguinary characters as the vicious Count Frankenhausen (Carlos Agost) and the satanic Nostradamus (German Robles as the famed prophet of the future) each starred in their own series of horror films made in Mexico with incredibly cheap budgets.

But Mexico's most obvious Dracula imitations is Count Lavud, played by South-of-the-Border-Lugosi, German Robles. Count Lavud is an exact carbon copy of Lugosi's Dracula, with the exception of some graying hair and a pair of sharp fangs that gives him the distinction of being the first Dracula type vampire with sharp canines in the movies.

Count Lavud's first screen appearance is in the 1956 film *El Vampiro* (seen on American television under its translated title *The Vampire*). Incognito as Count Daval (a clever backwards spelling of his name, second only to the ubiquitous "Alucard"), the tuxedoed nobleman raises his cape and transforms (via a simple cut) into a rather large and unconvincing vampire but to claim his sleeping victim. At the end of the film Count Lavud/Daval is impaled by the traditional stake through the heart.

But he returns for a second jaunt in the 1957 sequel *El Atavido del Vampiro* (known on TV as *The Vampire's Coffin*). Lavud is identified when his impaled corpse reflects a skeleton in a mirror. The stake is removed and "El Vampiro" flies again. In the final scenes, the hero, played by Abel Salazar, burls a wooden spear through

the attacking monster bat, pinning it against the wall. A simple dissolve shows the bat transform into the human form of Count Lavud (and still pinned).

*El Vampiro* and *El Ataúd del Vampiro* are but two of the numerous Mexican *Dracula* rip-offs. The plots are standard fare with direction in imitation of Universal's old thrillers, complete with close-ups of glaring eyes, capes raised like batwings, cloaked figures lurking through the fog, and the like. They create a type of false nostalgia. For even though they are of such recent vintage, they recall an earlier, simpler era.

Perhaps the most blatant Mexican *Dracula* rip-off was *Frankenstein, el Vampiro y Compañía* ("Frankenstein, the Vampire and Company," with a peculiar spelling of 'Frankenstein'), made in 1961 by Cinematografica Calderon. This is the story of two zanyes, Paco and Agapito, who are employed by an express company. They are supposed to bring the wax figures of the Vampire and Frankenstein to an old house. Both figures turn out to be genuine. The Vampire is revived and attempts to take the dumb brain of Agapito and transplant it into the head of Frankenstein. The Wolf Man, meanwhile, tries to stop them for he knows that the Vampire wants to use the monster in his plans to conquer America! In the laboratory, just before the transplant operation can take place, the full moon rises and ...

No use in going on. You've heard the story before when it was called *Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein*. Cinematografica Calderon not only ripped-off the already multi-ripped Count Dracula but Frankenstein's Monster, the Wolf Man and an entire film as well.

Some unknown Transylvanian Bard is reputed to have said, "A Count by any other name . . ." or something to that effect. And Gertrude Frankenstein, that celebrated authoress from Ingolstadt University, once wrote, "A Dracula is a Dracula is a Dracula . . ."

No matter what you call him.



Edward Van Sloan as Van Helsing and Lugosi as the King of Vampires in a stage play that starred the famous movie cast of *Dracula*.

H Elio Chano as the Wolfman and Abello Díazgarcía as the Vampire in the Mexican *Frankenstein el Vampiro y Cia.*



# KEEP YOUR COFFIN DRY, NEVADA

By  
Jim Harmon

Two men trapped in a bleak Southwestern desert with a gun-toting, crazy old man and something far more sinister just over the ridge! Listen — you can hear it howling — or is it laughing at its helpless victim? A short story to invoke the atmosphere of such old radio shows as *Inner Sanctum*, *I Love a Mystery*, and *Lights Out*.

"Ten o'clock at night in the middle of the Nevada desert with our car on its side, and us a hundred miles from civilization and almost as far to Las Vegas," Lank Barton drawled on in a drowsy monotone. "By my grandfather's whiskers, I don't know how a feller can get himself in such a mess."

Whisper Michaels squatted by the red glow of their tiny campfire. He was shorter and heavier-shouldered than the tall man who was stirring up the sand with his impatient pacing. The two men's faces did not resemble each other, yet there was something of the same glint of humor about their eyes, and set of determination around their mouths.

"You want to know how we got in this mess?" His voice was not so much a whisper as a growl. The name "Whisper" lingered from the earliest effects of the cold forced down his throat by a medical man in Mexico City who was having certain difficulties with the local authorities. "You got us into this mess, I told you not to drive so fast on these roads. Don't you know there's a speed limit?"

"Whisper, you know that don't apply to me," Lank told him. "When we was through here a couple of years ago, my cousin Rafe made me an honorary deputy sheriff of Coffin County."

"Now there's an honor for you," Whisper grumbled. "An honorary deputy sheriff for a thousand square miles of sand — not so much as an oilhouse for a hundred of those miles."

"Now that's where you're wrong, gent. No, don't reach for your sidearms, boys."

It was a new voice cutting through the still desert night. The newcomer stepped into the small circle of campfire light, his figure a red-rimmed silhouette against the black sky with its hard stars. He was a wily little man, old but not stooped. "Mind if I share your camp?" he asked the two.

"We're particular," Whisper said. "Who are you?"

"That's not etiquette in this part of creation," the old man said.

Whisper Michaels stood up and faced the old man. "Do you mind so much?"

"I don't mind. My name's Dirty Dan."

Lank pushed the broad-brimmed hat back on

his head. "Dirty Dan. Now there's a name for you, huh, Whisper?"

The old man spat into the fire. It fizzled. "Yep. Dirty Dan. The 'Dan' is because my proper name is Daniel, and as for the rest of it —"

"You can skip the explanations," Whisper said. "We'll draw our own conclusions."

"Draw? Draw?" Dirty Dan demanded. "You want to shoot it out? I'm ready for you, you —"

"Hold it, Dan," Lank said soothingly. "No gun play. You'll wake up the prairie dogs."

"Won't wake up the town of Keep Your Coffin Dry, though. No, sir." Dirty Dan burst out laughing. The laughter changed to coughing. He spat into the fire again.

"What's that?" Whisper demanded. "A town called Keep Your Coffin Dry?"

"Keep Your Coffin Dry, Nevada," Dan affirmed. "There's a mighty colorful story about how it got called that way. But I never heard it. I forgot it."

"That's a big help," Whisper grumbled. "That's what you meant by us not being so far from any buildings."

"Plenty of buildings right over the next ridge," Dan told them. "A regular metropolis. General store, boarding house, three shacks, one house, cluttering up good desert. Plenty of buildings. No people, though. Once had twenty three people."

"I guess that was back sixty or seventy years, around the turn of the century, huh, Dan?" Lank said.

"Now." Dan spat again. He missed the fire. "That was last night, before they all got killed."

"Got killed!" Whisper exclaimed. "A whole village wiped out. What are you trying to tell us, Dan?"

"I am telling you, stranger," Dan said. "The whole of Keep Your Coffin Dry was murdered by the ghost wolf last night, and if you want to go for your iron —"

"You're getting less funny all the time, Dan," Lank said, his usual easy-going manner departing him. "I don't like folks creeping up on me, talking about murder, and threatening to shoot it out with me. I think I better take away any gun you might be carrying."

The old man crouched like an animal. "Try it and you're a dead man, Texas."

Just then, Whisper Michaels moved forward in



one motion jerking a long-barreled revolver out of Dan's hip pocket and pushing the old man down onto the sand.

"Knock an old man down, would you?" Dirty Dan whined.

"One who is threatening to kill my partner, sure" Whisper let out a low whistle. "Lank, this old gun —"

"Thirty-eight Peacemaker, I'd judge," Lank said.

"Yeah, but it's loaded with silver bullets." Whisper turned to the old man who still lay where he fell. "Who do you think you are? The Lone Ranger?"

"I ain't no kind of ranger, or sheriff, but I know what you need to hunt a werewolf," Dirty Dan snarled.

"Werewolf!" Lank Barton laughed easily. "I may be a superstitious Texas boy, but even I know werewolves are like vampires and Frankensteins — they are only in fairy story books and monster movies."

"Well, Texas Boy, you can also find a werewolf in *Keep Your Coffin Dry*," Dan said. "He ate twenty-three people last night. I figure he's going to be hungry again tonight and mean mad that there's only the three of us to satisfy his appetite."

# # #

Midnight was drawing on, and the desert was getting even colder. Dirty Dan had told the two men more of his story, and they had volunteered the information that they were private detectives, currently headquartered in Las Vegas. Their company was Deuce Investigations. In exchange, Dan had explained to them that the entire population of the tiny desert town had vanished the night before, the same night he had seen a strange hairy creature in the glare of the full moon.

"The Indians around here talk about a ghost wolf," Dirty Dan went on. "My daughter, Mercedes, says as how that's just a very-ration on the werewolf legend. She studied all kinds of fool things at U.C.L.A. — that's in Los Angeles."

"I know," Whisper said.

"Just chock full of information, ain't you?" Dan spat again.

Lank cleared his throat, and sat down beside the old desert rat near the embers of their fire. "Say, Dan, this is the first time you mentioned your daughter. Is she pretty?"

"If you like 'em skinny," the old man said. "She can't weigh more than a hundred and forty or fifty. Say, do you like 'em skinny, Texas? She can cook, you know. But she's mighty particular about men. Won't talk to one unless he's wearing shoes."

"Upity, huh?" Lank said.

"That's the word for her," the old man agreed. "She sure puts worry on the shoulders of her poor old daddy. What worries me the most is this idea of hers to go out and meat the werewolf tonight."

"Your daughter is going out to meet a werewolf, and you," Whisper said, "are just sitting here?"

"Sitting here with a six-shooter loaded with silver bullets, originally," the old man said. "Before you took it."

"And if you find your werewolf, you're going to

shoot it," Whisper said.

"Won't have no trouble finding it. I saw the ghost wolf three nights running right about here. Thought you was him at first. First time he built a fire, I thought. Thee I —"

"Why is your daughter leaving your camper and going out to meet this werewolf creature anyway?" Whisper demanded.

"Love and compassion" she tells me," the old man said. "You can reach any creature with 'love and compassion'. Red propaganda, I calls it."

Lank grabbed Whisper's arm. "Son, would you look there!"

The two investigators gazed at a figure that seemed to be from some distant mirage — a white-robed girl drifting through the moonlight on the white sands.

"A hundred and forty or fifty?" Whisper said. "That girl couldn't weigh a hundred pounds, Dan. She's a creature of ethereal beauty. She hardly seems to touch the ground. Is that Mercedes?"

The old man nodded. "That's her. She's wearing one of the robes from one of them foreign religions she got herself messed up in back in Los Angeles. Always investigating re-incarnation and voodoo and . . ."

"Dan," Whisper interrupted, "what makes you so sure this creature you saw killed everybody in town? The locals might have seen it too and ran away, went into hiding."

"Maybe, but —"

Lank's fingers tightened on Whisper's shoulder again. "Son, do you see what I see? You couldn't be that crazy too!"

They both saw it. Mercedes had shed her flowing robe and her body was changing... crouching... becoming furry... Moonlight gleamed on sharp white teeth.

Dirty Dan moved fast for an old man. He seized his own revolver from Whisper's waist-bend and fired one silver bullet. The twisted figura howled and fell, lying very still.

Dan faced the two men squarely, putting away his gun. "That was something she must have learned in Los Angeles. She would have been okay if she had stayed in *Keep Your Coffin Dry*."

H



# The Many Sons of Kong

Photo by Jim  
Hawkins



Robert Armstrong and Fay Wray are aided by the Son of Kong

With the success of *King Kong*, RKO saw that it had a gold mine on its hands. The public of the 1933 Depression days was slapping down its money to escape its problems and watch the animation skill of Willis O'Brien make the adventures on Skull Island and New York excruciatingly real.

Any film fan knows that if a particular film, or type of film, is a success, sequels or imitations will spring up like crab grass run riot. *King Kong* was no exception, in that same year of 1933, *Son of Kong* made its appearance with the most the same production group (albeit with a few changes in personnel). Ernest Schoedsack soloed as director while Ruth Rose put together the screenplay. But instead of having a different group of characters conveniently stumble upon Skull Island, Robert Armstrong was recast as Carl Denham, though not as free-wheeling as in the first film. In fact, as *Son of Kong* begins, Denham is hiding out in a boarding house from the process servers and creditors, all out to collect damages caused by *Kong's* tour of "Fun City."

Getting together with Capt. Englehorn (Frank Reicher, again), Denham talks the dour skipper into using his ship as a tramp freighter, carrying cargo in the South Pacific. With only one member of the old crew (Cherille, the Chinese cook) and a

new crew made up of derelicts and cut-throats, Denham and Englehorn soon encounter Helstrom, the man who sold Denham the original map to Skull Island, on Java. In the course of events, Helstrom proves to be something of a stinker as he kills a rundown showman. The victim's daughter, Hilda (Helen Mack), then hides aboard Denham's ship which puts out to sea with Helstrom now part of the crew.

Following the crew's discovery of the girl, Helstrom incites a mutiny, only to be put overboard with Denham, the captain, Charlie and Hilda. Adrift, the group winds up on Skull Island again, where they are met by the natives—who remember Denham very well; they're still angry at him for the damage to their village when *Kong* went on his rampage.

Landing on the other side of the island—the jungle side—Denham and his group encounter a smaller (but still gigantic) edition of *Kong* stuck in a bog. Hilda and Denham help "little *Kong*" escape the mire, with an Androcles and the Lion relationship beginning, end during the course of the picture, Willis O'Brien's special effects enable young *Kong* to bestie a prehistoric bear and a huge reptile before helping Denham discover a lost treasure of jewels inside an ancient temple.

Helstrom tries to steal the treasure but gets hit when an earthquake proceeds to tear apart the island. He's devoured by a sea monster while trying to make off with the group's dinghy. All get away except Denham, who is trying to help young *Kong* free his foot from some rocks.

As the island sinks in the ocean, the good-hearted giant Son of *Kong* holds Denham over his head as he is engulfed by the ocean. Denham is then rescued by his friends, and the film ends with the group picked up by a passing ship and facing a new life with the treasure.

Shorter than *King Kong* by about half an hour, *Son of Kong* is an entertaining followup with *Kong's* offspring a creation that no doubt had audiences touched when he met his heroic end. Not seen often today, the brunt of the revival screenings going to the original *King Kong*, *Son of Kong* reeks as fine adventure/fantasy with plenty of opportunities for observing O'Brien's magnificent special effects work.

Ernest Schoedsack and Ruth Rose were again in their respective positions as director and writer in 1949, when John Ford and Merian C. Cooper combined forces to come up with *Mighty Joe Young*, crammed with the work of O'Brien and then-newcomer Ray Harryhausen. Keeping



For '58's *King Kong vs. Godzilla*, replace with America's favorite ape, *King Kong*, in a film surprisingly titled *King Kong vs. Godzilla*, Universal-Tokyo, 1958.

memories of *King Kong* alive for a new generation of filmgoers that had probably seen reissues of the classic original, Robert Armstrong popped up as Max O'Hara, a wheeling-dealing promoter of the Denham school, looking for a new attraction to put in his proposed New York nightclub (jungle atmosphere, complete with lions under glass!).

In Africa with a group of cowboys whose job is to rope (i) the lions, O'Hara encounters the gigantic "Mr. Joseph Young" and soon talks Joe's pretty mistress, Terry Moore, into bringing the giant ape back to America. Ben Johnson wound up with Miss Moore and Frank McHugh was Armstrong's partner.

Like *Kong's* son, Joe Young was a sympathetic character, something of a victim of circumstances, just like his predecessors. His moment of danger comes twice—once when he wrecks O'Hara's jungle nightclub (after being made drunk by some obnoxious troublemakers), battling lions in the process, and second when he helps rescue some children in a blazing orphanage fire (possibly one of the most exciting moments in the film with the animation it's best). As all viewers of the film know, a character like Joe, with all the sympathy that has been built up for him, isn't going to get killed. Joe, Miss Moore and Johnson manage to

return to Africa where they can cope with the tribulations of the jungle instead of city traffic.

In 1949, Abbott & Costello, along with Clyde Beatty and Frank Buck, encountered a giant ape in Africa Screams; while Unknown Island had Barton MacLane, Richard Denning, Virginia Gray and Philip Reed encounter dinosaurs and a man in an ape-suit, with some trimming, as a 'giant sloth' in Cinecolor.

Giant apes got some peace until 1960 when Herman Cohen's Konga appeared. Michael Gough chewed the scenery as a mad scientist who injected a friendly chimp with a serum that turned it into a gorilla; a second dose got Konga going on a King Kong binge as he tromped through London with Gough in his hand, still growing! Besides Konga and his serum, Gough also had a well-stocked greenhouse filled with men—and men-eating plants.

Then, in 1963, friends of Kong watched anxiously when Toho Films and Universal came up with King Kong vs. Godzilla! No longer the animated jungle monarch, Kong was reduced to a man in an ape suit. Needless to say, Kong was put through a repeat of his Empire State number, using Tokyo Tower and a screaming Japanese girl in his paw. The 'epic' battle between the poor man's Kong and the giant lizard reminded one of a pair of sumo wrestlers going at it—with plenty of Toho's miniature houses around for convenient smashing.

Not hedging any bets, Toho had release prints made with two endings for Japanese and American audiences. Japanese fans saw Godzilla emerge triumphant, while U.S. viewers saw Kong come out on top, then start swimming the ocean back to his island, no doubt thoroughly disgusted with civilization.

Toho and Universal joined forces for King Kong Escapes in 1967, with the same man-in-the-ape-suit now combined with 'heavies' out to get a valuable element that only Kong can dig up. American and Japanese actors were put through the paces with the heavy known as Dr. Who (looking like a Japanese Drecule with his fangs removed) and a robot edition of Kong brought into play. Both Kong and his robot double met and battled in style similar to the encounter with Godzilla. Mie Hama was cast as a lady spy. She had been served better in You Only Live Twice where she got James Bond instead of the big gorilla.

Another epic in the genre was The Mighty Gorilla (1971), crammed with a wild plot—lost plateau of prehistoric flora and fauna à la Lost World, a circus owner seeking a new attraction with the help of a great white hunter, Bwana Jack; his daughter; and inadvertently a giant ape—guess who?

Kong climbed the heights on the Empire State building. Some of his descendants never made it so far up.

Five years later, King Kong Escapes again and has to fight the robot doppelganger.

HN



# THE LIFE STORY OF KING KONG

By Jim Harmon



Enough monkeying around — let's get down to the facts of Kong's biography! This is the whole story, in case you don't remember, and even if you do, there are heretofore never revealed facts about this powerful simian! (See end)

Ann Darrow came back to consciousness, confused, fear trembling through her mind. Where was she? Not in the bread line back in New York looking for a bowl of soup to keep her going another day... Was it the ship, the *Wanderer*, where Carl Denham, the adventurous film maker, had brought her with a promise of an honest job, and where she had met the handsome first mate, Jack Driscoll? No, no, the ship had arrived at Skull Island, they had come ashore, and the natives had seen her. "Yeah, blondes are kind of scarce in these parts," Denham had remarked.

Now she remembered! The natives had sneaked aboard the ship and had stolen her away for a sacrifice to their hideous jungle god. Ann Darrow was tied between two pillars, offered as a sacrifice to be the *Bride of Kong*!

She struggled with the ropes that held her, the chanting of the natives driving into her brain. Then she heard it, thumping above the thunder of the drums, Something was coming. It was getting closer... closer...

Great hands parted trees as others would push aside a beaded curtain. Blinking, staring eyes and a grinning row of teeth as wide as a ditch — or a grave. He came through the curtain of trees and stood erect shaking a fist in defiance as the puny humans clustered on the great wall.

He was as tall as eight or ten ordinary gorillas, a king among apes — *King Kong*!

Ann screamed and kept screaming.

Kong looked down at the tiny creature twisting and turning against the ropes that held her. He had never seen anything like this before. It interested him strangely. Hair like trapped sunlight, skin so fair, so soft... He reached out a curious hand. Yes, soft as she looked. Kong broke the ropes with a flick of an impatient finger. Yes, he would take this interesting little creature with him and examine it in his own lair. Like all apes, Kong had a powerful curiosity and he intended to satisfy himself.

#### STOP THE FILM!

That's the way Edgar Wallace and Merian C. Cooper's story of the 1933 RKO picture, *King Kong*, goes but let us explain the situation a bit closer.

The implication is sometimes given that Ann is the first woman the King of Skull Island has ever seen. But of course the natives had offered him other brides — lovely black-skinned maidens. We must also remember that Kong was not always as gigantic as he eventually grew. At one time, he was no bigger than his son (seen less than a year later in *Son of Kong*). Earlier, and even younger, he was smaller. He was not much bigger than the first "bride" he had been given. Of course, he was just a baby. He had taken this first "bride" from the ales and had taken her into the forest with him. In time, she had learned not to fear the ape. She was hardly more than a child herself. Soon she learned to play hide and seek with the friendly creature, to braid wild flowers in his furry coat. She had tried to return to her people, but



A preliminary drawing for a scene never filmed where Kong

escaped from Yankee Stadium, instead of a theatre.

they would not open the great wall for her. The natives still remembered Kong's full-grown father who had died earlier in a battle with one of the great prehistoric creatures that also inhabited the island. The young Kong had done his best to protect the native girl, but in time, just once he failed, and he was alone again. But he was growing older and bigger. Much bigger. Bigger than his father had ever been — bigger than any Kong had ever been.

Fully grown, he had found Ann to be hardly more than a toy in his hand. But he remembered his earlier "bride" and Ann was like her, yet different, excitingly different.

Of course, this is not in the film and is pure speculation on the part of the present writer, but I feel it must have been this way.

#### NOW, THE NEXT REEL:

Denham clutched the high-powered rifle with which he had just slain a dinosaur — a dinosaur in the third decade of the Twentieth Century.

"Prehistoric life," Denham said in marvel to the tease Driscoll at his side. "Jack — she was right last night on the ship. Ann, I mean. But she only had the start of it.

She guessed the beast-god was some kind of primitive life surviving into the present. But if this thing we've killed means anything, the plateau is alive with all sorts of creatures that have survived along with Kong."

In a few hours, they had left the jungle trail and were taking a hastily constructed raft down the river, when they found another of those primitive survivors from the dawn of creation. Or rather, it found them, coming up beneath their raft and breaking it into splintered sticks.

The great lizard picked the men out of the water like tid-bits from a bowl of soup. The dinosaur picked up one sailor by his head, and had the disappointment of watching the rest of the body fall back into the water when the head separated at the neck.

The desperate men swam and scrambled to shore. Denham, Driscoll, and the surviving sailors were still game to save Ann. They pushed on into the interior of Skull Island, once more on foot, with few weapons to defend themselves.

Ann Darrow awoke screaming. She had done that several times since Kong had

carried her into his world. First there had been one fight with a great prehistoric beast and then another. It was all in a day's work for Kong. Ann had passed out several times, and had reluctantly come back to the horror of reality.

They were now in Kong's cave, his lair on top of a steep cliff. With nothing to distract him, Kong began to examine his new toy more carefully. The novelization of *King Kong* by Delos W. Lovelace described the scene:

Kong snatched at her. His hand caught in her dress and the dress tore in his huge fingers. More whiteness was revealed. Kong touched the smooth revelation. He pulled again at the torn dress. Then, holding Ann tightly, he began to pluck her clothes away as a chimpanzee might clumsily undress a doll. As each garment came free into his hand, he felt it excitedly, plainly trying to find some connection between the trill tissue and the whiteness exposed.

From a ledge below, Jack Driscoll was watching helplessly, still determinedly trying to climb the cliff to make some kind of near suicidal attempt to save the girl.

Kong's examination of his curious captive was interrupted by a huge flying reptile who swooped down on great bat-like wings — the dread pterodactyl. The reptile had chosen Ann as a morsel of food, and was lifting the girl — now near mad with terror — in its claws when the beast-god of Skull Island chose to interfere.

King Kong's hands closed over the mammoth predator and broke it to pieces as a child might read apart a kite of sticks and tissue paper in a moment of anger.

The distraction allowed Jack Driscoll to creep over the edge of the cliff and rush to Ann's side.

"Jack! I kept praying, and praying, and you didn't come!" Ann gasped.

"I'm here now, Ann."

"Jack — don't let him touch me again!"

It took a plunge into the river below, and a maddened rush back to the great wall, before Driscoll and Ann found Carl Denham valiantly trying to raise another band of volunteers from the ship's crew for another attempt to rescue Ann.

Everybody was happy that Ann had returned safely, along with the First Mate. But it was not enough for the grimly determined Denham. He knew that Kong would not stay safely in his own world. He would come back to the great wall. "We've got something he wants," Denham said.

The movie director had no intention of using Ann for bait. He wanted her safely aboard the ship, but he knew that the memory of Beauty would be enough to lure the Beast out into the open — out where the monarch of the prehistoric world would fall victim to modern science — the gas bombs Denham carried with him.

Denham might as well have written the script. Kong did return, crashing through the mighty gates of the huge wall, scattering the helpless natives and following



the party from civilization onto the beach.

Denham faced the towering creature and pitched gas bombs at it. One bomb struck Kong squarely on his matted chest. He could not escape the cloud of vapor rising to choke him, blind him, make him dizzy... He fell to one knee. Kong reached out a hand for Ann, who stood desperately clutching at Driscoll for protection.

With a sigh, King Kong collapsed onto the sands and lay still.

"We've got him!" Denham gloated in a delirium of triumph. "Send some of the crew. Tell 'em to fetch anchor chains and tools. We'll chain him up, and build a raft to float him out to the ship..."

"No chain will hold... that," the captain said grimly.

"We'll give him more than chains. He's always been a king of his world. He's got something to learn... Fear! That will hold him, if chains alone won't."

Denham turned to the crew of uncertain sailors.

"Don't you understand? We've got the biggest thing in the world! There's a million in it and I'm going to share with all of you. Listen! A few months from now it will be up in lights on Broadway -- King Kong -- the Eighth Wonder of the World!"

# # #

Ann Darrow awoke with a sigh.

These terrible events on Skull Island seemed far away. There had been that long, almost leisurely cruise back to, the United States. Moonlight nights with Jack... on one of them, he'd asked her to marry him. Then there had been Carl Denham's big night -- the presentation of the living King Kong to the jaded audience of a big Broadway theatre. She and Jack had had to go -- it was the least they could do for Mr. Denham. It was so important to him.

Kong had been there -- but subdued, chained, a king humbled. She had posed for the photographers with Jack, his arm around her. Flash bulbs popped furiously and then somehow, impossibly, horribly, Kong was loose!

He had sent the audience scurrying to a madened

*King Kong fights the airplanes from atop the Empire State Building—possibly the*

*most famous scene in the entire history of motion pictures! (Except that there were only three planes in the movie—eight in the original still—and ten by the time our deft design-director got thru with 'em.)*

the top of the tallest building in the world. And what was that diving at them, out of the sun? Airplanes!

# # #

LADIES — PLEASE REMOVE YOUR HATS!  
No, that's the wrong side. Here's the one I want:  
SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT!

Yes, there were airplanes coming after Kong — primitive bi-planes looking much like they did in the First World War. Who were flying those planes? They are only unnamed "Army pilots from Roosevelt Field"—but who are they really? One story has it that Merian C. Cooper,

producer of the picture, is in the cockpit of the lead plane. But that is only in the motion picture re-enactment. Who was flying those planes when the actual events occurred?

Does it stand to reason that so great a figure as King Kong could be slain by just an anonymous pilot? Not to me. I can't prove this but I know who must have been the leader of that squadron. Only one man could have done the job.

During the First World War, he had been known only as G-8. Together with his Battle Birds, G-8 had fought

other menaces, some nearly as great as King Kong. A man who can fight a horde of giant bats can move to fighting a giant ape more easily than those with less experience. Of course the war was over now. G-8 had added "4" to his name in honor of four fallen comrades. He was now Twelve, or more specifically, Midnight — Captain Midnight. (There were vicious rumors that this man had taken to wearing a cloak and shooting people in the dark of night, but they were only rumors. He had always flown high and clear. He did not hide in the shadows like some creeping spider.) So it was Captain Midnight, and the men who flew with him, who attacked King Kong. They were good men — Jack Martin, Jimmie Allen, Tommy Tompkins — some of them were young, but they had the skill and courage of born fliers. Their tiny biplanes dropped to do combat with the mightiest monster the world had ever known!

#### FINAL REEL:

Kong put Ann down on a ledge circling the top of the building. He put her down to better meet the attack of the puny things that challenged him, even though they could offer him no more threat than the winged lizards of his own world. He shook his fist at them.

The first plane dropped in a long slide. It seemed to

hang for a second, suspended in time and space, before it poured forth the first burst of machine-gun fire. Kong brushed at his chest, puzzled at the stinging sensation.

At that moment Jack Driscoll came through a door in the tower, prepared to pull Ann to safety.

There were more planes diving on Kong, firing tiny bullets into his massive body. They did not have it all their own way. One brush of his mighty hand sent one of the insects annoying him plunging into flaming ruin.

But still they came, circling, firing... Kong felt his great strength draining away.

King Kong turned to Ann. He wanted to pick her up, once more, to hold her... He turned back to the airplanes and bellowed another challenge, but it broke off into a cough. He stretched out his hand for her, but he could not reach her, or even see her...

The King fell. The beast-god of Skull Island lay a broken wreck on the streets of New York.

Denham and a police sergeant pushed their way through the crowd and stood next to clamped mouth and the blood-wet ear of the monster.

"The airplanes got him," the policeman said.

"No," Denham said, "it wasn't the airplanes. It was Beauty killed the Beast."

THE END.



There'll be more on King Kong — and on his filmic creator, Willis O'Brien — in a near-future issue of MONSTERS OF THE MOVIES!



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